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300
Vol I

ROAD TO RUIN.



ROTHA. I WOULD NOT GIVE YOU THIS TINY
BIT OF PAPER, NO NOT FOR A DIAMOND AS BIG AS
ACT. III. BIG AS THE WHOLE WORLD.

THE
BRITISH THEATRE ;

OR,

A COLLECTION OF PLAYS,

WHICH ARE ACTED AT

THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE, COVENT GARDEN, AND HAYMARKET.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOKS.

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL REMARKS,

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. XXIV.

ROAD TO RUIN.

DESERTED DAUGHTER.

STRANGER.

DE MONFORT.

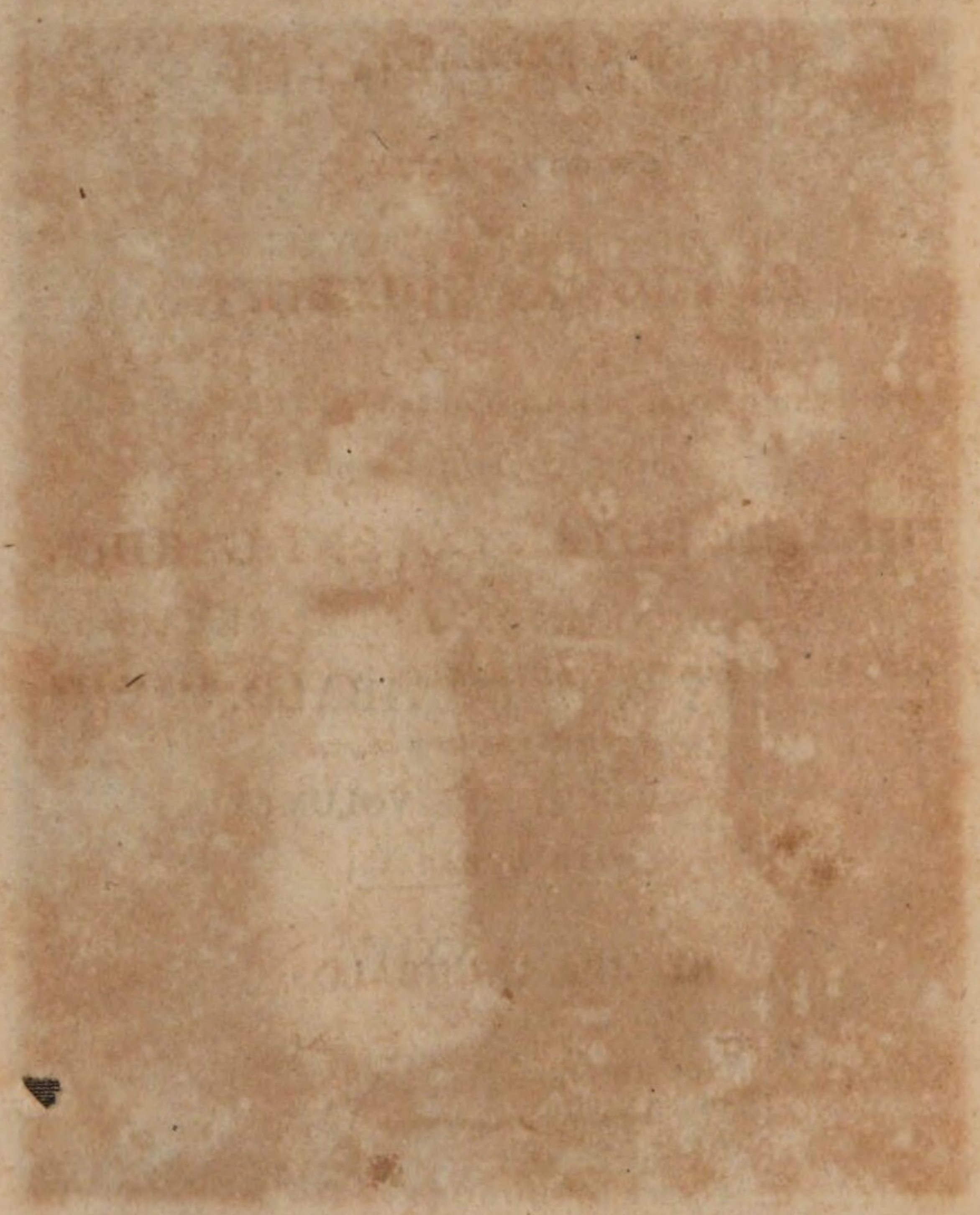
POINT OF HONOUR.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1808.

THE
BRITISH FIELD



WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRINTER,
BEDFORD BURY.

THE
ROAD TO RUIN;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By THOMAS HOLCROFT.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

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REMARKS.

This comedy ranks among the most successful of modern plays. There is merit in the writing, but much more in that dramatic science, which disposes character, scenes, and dialogue, with minute attention to theatric exhibition: for the author has nicely considered, that it is only by passing the ordeal of a theatre with safety, that a drama has the privilege of being admitted to a library.

The nice art, with which the conversations in this play are written, will, by a common reader, pass unadmired and unnoticed. Some of the most important speeches consist of no more than one line. The grand skill has been to make no skill evident—to force a reader to forget the author, but to remember his play, and each distinct character.

To produce this effect, both on the stage and in the closet, the whole comedy is perfectly natural. Paternal and filial affection are described with infinite power, and yet without one inflated or poetic sentence.—The scenes between Dornton and his son are not like scenes in a play, but like occurrences in the house of a respectable banker, who has a dissipated, though a loving and beloved, son.

Nature has never been violated in this comedy, except in one instance; where, in search of too much nature, the author has been deluded into the wiles of art.

In a comedy, where every part is deformed by extravagance, Sophia would appear a probable character.—But the tax on an able dramatist is—to have his slightest failure observed: for who can behold that which is near perfect, without longing after perfection itself?

Sophia is described as being turned of seventeen; and, though she did come from Gloucestershire, she is certainly old enough to be wiser than she is;—it is therefore a reproach to Harry Dornton's taste, that he should fix his choice on her, rather than on her mother; for, as far as a rogue is preferable to a fool, the mother would certainly have made the most companionable wife; and a husband might, in her case, have looked forward with hope, to the chance of amendment.

In the original disposal of the parts of this play to the actors, there was novelty;—and, what does not always combine with novelty, improvement. Lewis, in a low comedy part, was new to the town: and, by superior ability, he added interest and importance to a character, where a professed low comedian would merely have excited a loud laugh.

Coarse manners, like old age, should always be counterfeit on the stage: when either of these is inherent in the actor himself, as well as in the character he represents, the sensitive part of the audience are more afflicted than entertained.

Lewis, in Goldfinch, had the talent to display all the bold features of the vulgar citizen, whilst his own constitutional refinement prevented the audience from

feeling themselves in bad company. He has, in fact, when he descends to play what is called low comedy, the very soul of vulgarity, without incommoding his audience with any of its gross corporeal parts.

Munden was another excellent novelty, transformed from low to high comedy:—nothing relating to him appeared assumed; (characters of the good should not show the counterfeit) and his person, dress, manners, all excited such a degree of reverence, that even when it was said his banking-house had failed, a miser would have placed his whole store of gold there, with perfect confidence. Then, all he had to say in rage against his son, was delivered with such parental fondness, that voice, mien, and features were opposed to every angry sentence; and gave a highly finished proof how words can falsify the meaning of the heart. Still he did not speak as if to deceive his hearers, but skilfully showed he was deceiving himself.

“The Road to Ruin” is a complete drama; resting its power on itself alone, without adventitious aid; neither music, song, dance, or spectacle, such as authors fly to, when, like Shakspeare’s Orlando, “they are gravelled for lack of matter,” is here introduced. This is an example that should ever be pursued, when it can be done with safety. But good plays are difficult to produce; and those, who write often, must divide the materials, which would constitute one extraordinary, into two ordinary dramas.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MR. DORNTON
HARRY DORNTON
MR. SULKY
MR. SILKY
GOLDFINCH
MR. MILFORD
MR. SMITH
HOSIER
SHERIFF'S OFFICER
JACOB

Mr. Munden.
Mr. Holman.
Mr. Wilson.
Mr. Quick.
Mr. Lewis.
Mr. Harley.
Mr. Powell.
Mr. Macready.
Mr. Thompson.
Mr. Rees.

MRS. WARREN
SOPHIA
JENNY
MRS. LEDGER

Mrs. Maddocks.
Mrs. Merry.
Mrs. Harlowe.
Mrs. Powell.

WAITER, CLERKS, SERVANTS, TRADESMEN, POSTIL-
LIONS, TENNIS MARKERS, MILLINERS, MANTUA-
MAKERS, &c. &c.

SCENE,—London.

THE
ROAD TO RUIN.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The House of DORNTON.

MR. DORNTON *alone.*

Dorn. Past two o'clock, and not yet returned!—
Well, well—it's my own fault!—Mr. Smith!

Enter Mr. SMITH.

Mr. Smith. Sir!

Dorn. Is Mr. Sulky come in?

Mr. Smith. No, sir.

Dorn. Are you sure Harry Dornton said he should
return to-night?

Mr. Smith. Yes, sir.

Dorn. And you don't know where he is gone?

Mr. Smith. He did not tell me, sir.

Dorn. [*Angrily.*] I ask if you know!

Mr. Smith. I believe, to Newmarket, sir.

Dorn. You always believe the worst!—I'll sit up
no longer—Tell the servants to go to bed—And, do
you hear, should he apply to you for money, don't let
him have a guinea.

Mr. Smith. Very well, sir.

Dorn. I have done with him ; he is henceforth no son of mine !—Let him starve !

Mr. Smith. He acts very improperly, sir, indeed.

Dorn. Improperly !—How ? What does he do ?

[*Alarmed.*]

Mr. Smith. Sir !

Dorn. Have you heard any thing of——

Mr. Smith. [*Confused.*] No—no, sir—nothing—nothing but what you yourself tell me.

Dorn. Then how do you know he has acted improperly ?

Mr. Smith. He is certainly a very goodhearted young gentleman, sir.

Dorn. Good hearted !—How dare you make such an assertion ?

Mr. Smith. Sir !

Dorn. How dare you, Mr. Smith, insult me so ?—Is not his gaming notorious ; his racing, driving, riding, and associating with knaves, fools, debauchees, and blacklegs ?

Mr. Smith. Upon my word, sir—I——

Dorn. But it's over !—His name has this very day been struck out of the firm ! Let his drafts be returned. It's all ended ! [*Passionately.*] And, observe, not a guinea ! If you lend him any yourself, I'll not pay you.—I'll no longer be a fond doting father ! Therefore take warning ! Take warning, I say ! Be his distress what it will, not a guinea ! Though you should hereafter see him begging, starving in the streets, not so much as the loan or the gift of a single guinea !

[*With great Passion.*]

Mr. Smith. I shall be careful to observe your orders, sir.

Dorn. Sir ! [*Terror.*] Why, would you see him starve ?—Would you see him starve, and not lend him a guinea ?—Would, you, sir ? Would you ?

Mr. Smith. Sir!—Certainly not, except in obedience to your orders!

Dorn. [*Amazement and Compassion.*] And could any orders justify your seeing a poor unfortunate youth, rejected by his father, abandoned by his friends, starving to death?

Mr. Smith. There is no danger of that, sir.

Dorn. I tell you the thing shall happen! He shall starve to death! [*Horror at the Supposition.*] I'll never look on him more as a son of mine: and I am very certain, when I have forsaken him, all the world will forsake him too. [*Almost in Tears.*] Yes, yes! he is born to be a poor wretched outcast!

Mr. Smith. I hope, sir, he still will make a fine man.

Dorn. Will!—There is not a finer, handsomer nobler looking youth in the kingdom; no, not in the world!

Mr. Smith. I mean a worthy good man, sir.

Dorn. How can you mean any such thing? The company he keeps would corrupt a saint.

Mr. Smith. Sir, if you will only tell me what your pleasure is, I will endeavour to act like a faithful servant.

Dorn. I know you are a faithful servant, Mr. Smith [*Takes his Hand.*]—I know you are,—but you—you are not a father!

Enter MR. SULKY, and MR. SMITH goes off.

Dorn. Well, Mr. Sulky, have you heard any thing of him?

Sulky. Yes.

Dorn. And, eh—— [*Excessively impatient.*] Any thing consoling, any thing good?

Sulky. No.

Dorn. No!—No, say you?—Where is he?—What is he about?

Sulky. I don't know.

Dorn. Don't?—You love to torture me, sir! You love to torture me.

Sulky. Humph.

Dorn. For Heaven's sake tell me what you have heard!

Sulky. I love to torture you.

Dorn. Put me out of my pain! If you are not a tiger, put me out of my pain!

Sulky. [*Reluctantly drawing a Newspaper out of his Pocket.*] There, read!

Dorn. Dead!

Sulky. Worse.

Dorn. Mercy defend me!—Where? What?

Sulky. The first paragraph in the postscript: the beginning line in capitals.

Dorn. [*Reads.*] *The junior partner of the great banking house, not a mile from the Post Office, has again been touched at Newmarket, for upward of ten thousand pounds—*[*Pause.*] *It can't be!*

Sulky. Humph.

Dorn. Why, can it?

Sulky. Yes.

Dorn. How do you know? What proof have you that this is not a lie?

Sulky. His own hand-writing.

Dorn. How!

Sulky. Bills, at three days sight, to the full amount, have already been presented.

Dorn. And accepted?

Sulky. Yes.

Dorn. But!—Why!—Were you mad, Mr. Sulky? Were you mad?

Sulky. I soon shall be.

Dorn. Is not his name struck off the firm?

Sulky. They were dated two days before.

Dorn. The credit of my house begins to totter!

Sulky. Well it may.

Dorn. What the effect of such a paragraph may be, I cannot tell.

Sulky. I can—Ruin.

Dorn. Are you serious, sir?

Sulky. I am not inclined to laugh—A run against the house, stoppage, disgrace, bankruptcy.

Dorn. Really, Mr. Sulky, you——

Sulky. Yes, I know I offend.—I was bred in your house, you used me tenderly, I served you faithfully, and you admitted me a partner. Don't think I care for myself. No; I can sit at the desk again. But you!—you!—First man of the first commercial city on earth, your name in the Gazette!—Were it mine only, I would laugh at it.—What am I?—Who cares for me?

Dorn. [*Calling.*] Mr. Smith!—Thomas;—William!——

Enter MR. SMITH.

Call all the servants together, Mr. Smith;—Clerks, footmen, maids, every soul! Tell them, their young master is a scoundrel!—

Mr. Smith. Very well, sir.

Dorn. Sir! [*His Anger recurring.*] Bid them shut the door in his face! I'll turn the first away that lets him set foot in this house ever again!

Mr. Smith. Very well, sir.

Dorn. Very well, sir! Damn your very well, sir!—I tell you, it is not very well, sir. He shall starve, die, rot in the street! Is that very well, sir?

[*Exeunt MR. DORNTON and MR. SMITH.*]

Sulky. He has a noble heart:—a fond father's heart. The boy was a fine youth, but he spoiled him; and now he quarrels with himself, and all the world, because he hates his own folly. [*Distant Knocking heard at the Street Door.*] So! here is the youth returned.

[*Knocking again.*]

Enter MR. DORNTON, followed by SERVANTS.

Dorn. Don't stir!—on your lives, don't go to the door!—Are the bolts and locks all fastened?

Servts. All, sir. [Knocking.]

Dorn. Don't mind his knocking! Go to bed every soul of you instantly, and fall fast asleep.—He shall starve in the streets! [Knocking again.] Fetch me my blunderbuss! Make haste! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

The Street, before the Door.

HARRY DORNTON, MILFORD, and POSTILLIONS.

Post. We smoked along, your honour.

Harry. [Knocks.] I know you did. Had you been less free with your whip, you would have been half a crown richer. Your next step should be, to turn drummers, and handle the cat o'nine tails.

Post. It is very late, your honour.

Harry. Begone! I'll give you no more. [Knocks.]
[Exeunt POSTILLIONS.]

Dorn. [Throwing up the Sash, and presenting the Blunderbuss—MR. SULKY behind.] Knock again, you scoundrel, and you shall have the full contents, loaded to the muzzle, rascal!

Harry. So! I suspected dad was in his tantarums.

Milf. You have given him some cause.

Harry. Very true. [To his Father.] Consider, my dear sir, the consequences of lying out all night!

Dorn. Begone, villain!

Harry. Bad women, sir; damps—night air—

Dorn. Will you begone?

Harry. Watch-houses—pickpockets—cut-throats!

Sulky. Come, come, sir—

[*Shutting down the Window.*

Milf. We shall not get in.

Harry. Pshaw! how little do you know of my father!—The door will open in less than fifteen seconds.

Milf. Done, for a hundred!

Harry. Done, done! [*They take out their Watches, and the Door opens.*] I knew you were had;—double or quits, we find the cloth laid, and supper on the table.

Milf. No, it won't do. [Exit into the House.

SCENE III.

DORNTON'S House.

Enter HARRY DORNTON, MILFORD, and FOOTMAN.

Foot. My old master is in a bitter passion, sir.

Harry. I know it.

Foot. He is gone down to turn the servant out of doors that let you in.

Harry. Is he? Then go you and let your fellow-servant in again.

Foot. I dare not, sir.

Harry. Then I must. [Exit.

Foot. He inquired who was with my young master.

Milf. Well!

Foot. And when he heard it was you, sir, he was ten times more furious. [Exit.

Enter HARRY DORNTON.

Harry. All's well that ends well.—This has been a cursed losing voyage, Milford!

Milf. I am a hundred and fifty in.

Harry. And I, ten thousand out!

Milf. I believe, I had better avoid your father, for the present.

Harry. I think you had. Dad considers you as my tempter; the cause of my ruin.

Milf. And I being in his debt, he conceives he may treat me without ceremony.

Harry. Nay, damn it, Jack, do him justice! It is not the money you had of him, but the ill advice he imputes to you, that galls him.

Milf. I hear, he threatens to arrest me.

Harry. Yes! He has threatened to strike my name out of the firm, and disinherit me, a thousand times!

Milf. O, but he has been very serious in menacing me.

Harry. And me too.

Milf. You'll be at the tennis-court to-morrow?

Harry. No.

Milf. What, not to see the grand match?

Harry. No.

Milf. O yes, you will.

Harry. No—I am determined.

Milf. Yes, over night—you'll waver in the morning.

Harry. No.—It is high time, Jack, to grow prudent.

Milf. Ha, ha, ha! My plan is formed: I'll soon be out of debt.

Harry. How will you get the money?

Milf. By calculation.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha!

Milf. I am resolved on it. How many men of rank and honour, having lost their fortunes, have doubly recovered them!

Harry. And very honourably!

Milf. Who doubts it?

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Nobody! nobody!

Milf. But, pray, Harry, what is it you find so attractive in my late father's amorous relict?

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! What, the Widow Warren?

Milf. She seems to think, and even reports, you are to marry!

Harry. Marry? her? A coquette of forty, who ridiculously apes all the airs of a girl! Fantastic, selfish, and a fool! And marry? Disgusting idea!—Thou wert philosophising, as we drove, on the condition of a post-horse——

Milf. Well?

Harry. I would rather be a post-horse, nay, the rascal that drives a post-horse, than the base thing thou hast imagined!

Milf. Then why are you so often there?

Harry. Because I can't keep away.

Milf. What, is it her daughter Sophia?

Harry. Lovely, bewitching innocent!

Milf. The poor young thing is fond of you.

Harry. I should be half mad, if I thought she was not; yet am obliged to half hope she is not.

Milf. Why?

Harry. What a question!—Am I not a profligate, and in all probability ruined?—Not even my father can overlook this last affair!—No!—Heigho!

Milf. The loss of my father's will, and the mystery made of its contents, by those who witnessed it, are strange circumstances!

Harry. In which the Widow triumphs. And, you being a bastard, and left by law to starve, she willingly pays obedience to laws so wise.

Milf. She refuses even to pay my debts.

Harry. And the worthy alderman, your father, being overtaken by death in the south of France, carefully makes a will, and then as carefully hides it where it is not to be found; or commits it to the custody of some mercenary knave, who has made his market of it to the Widow——So! here comes the supposed executor of this supposed will.

Enter MR. SULKY.

My dear Mr. Sulky, how do you do?

Sulky. Very ill.

Harry. Indeed?—I am very sorry! What's your disorder?

Sulky. You.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha!

Sulky. Ruin—bankruptcy—infamy!

Harry. The old story!

Sulky. To a new tune.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha!

Sulky. You are——

Harry. What, my good cynic?

Sulky. A fashionable gentleman.

Harry. I know it.

Sulky. And fashionably ruined.

Harry. No—I have a father.

Sulky. Who is ruined likewise.—

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Is the Bank of England ruined?

Sulky. I say ruined.—Nothing less than a miracle can save the house. The purse of Fortunatus could not supply you.

Harry. No, it held nothing but guineas. Notes, bills, paper for me!

Sulky. Such effrontery is insufferable. For these five years, sir, you have been driving to ruin more furiously than——

Harry. An ambassador's coach on a birth night—I saw you were stammering for a simile.

Sulky. Sir—!

Harry. Youth mounts the box, seizes the reins, and jehus headlong on in the dark; Passion and Prodigality blaze in the front, bewilder the coachman, and dazzle and blind the passengers; Wisdom, Prudence, and Virtue are overset and maimed or murdered; and at last Repentance, like the footman's flambeau, lagging behind, lights us to dangers when they are past all remedy.

Sulky. Your name is struck off the firm. I was the adviser.

Harry. You were very kind, Mr. Sulky.

Sulky. Your father is at last determined.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Do you think so?

Sulky. You'll find so!—And what brought you here, sir? [To MILFORD.

Milf. A chaise and four.

Sulky. It might have carried you to a safer place.—When do you mean to pay your debts?

Milf. When my father's executor prevails on the Widdow Warren to do me justice.

Sulky. And which way am I to prevail?

Milf. And which way am I to pay my debts?

Sulky. You might have more modesty, than insolently to come and brave one of your principal creditors, after having ruined his son by your evil counsel.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Don't believe a word on't, my good grumbler;—I ruined myself: I wanted no counsellor.

Milf. My father died immensely rich; and, though I am what the law calls illegitimate, I ought not to starve.

Sulky. You have had five thousand pounds, and are five more in debt.

Milf. Yes, thanks to those who trust boys with thousands.

Sulky. You would do the same now, that you think yourself a man.

Milf. [Firmly.] Indeed I would not.

Sulky. Had you been watching the Widow at home, instead of galloping after a knot of gamblers and pick-pockets, you might, perhaps, have done yourself more service.

Milf. Which way, sir?

Sulky. The will of your late father is found.

Milf. Found?

Sulky. I have received a letter, from which I learn, it was at last discovered, carefully locked up in a private drawer; and that it is now a full month, since a gentleman of Montpelier, coming to England, was entrusted with it. But no such gentleman has yet appeared.

Milf. If it should have got into the hands of the Widow——

Sulky. Which I suspect it has!—You are a couple of pretty gentlemen!—But, beware! Misfortune is at your heels! Mr. Dornton vows vengeance on you both, and justly.—He is not gone to bed; and, if you have confidence enough to look him in the face, I would have you stay where you are.

Milf. I neither wish to insult, nor be insulted.

[*Exit.*]

Sulky. Do you know, sir, your father turned the poor fellow into the street, who compassionately opened the door for you?

Harry. Yes;—and my father knows I as compassionately opened the door for the poor fellow in return.

Sulky. Very well, sir! Your fame is increasing daily.

Harry. I am glad to hear it.

Sulky. Humph! Then perhaps you have paragraphed yourself?

Harry. Paragraphed? What? Where?

Sulky. In the St. James's Evening.

Harry. Me?

Sulky. Stating the exact amount.

Harry. Of my loss?

Sulky. Yours—You march through every avenue to fame, dirty or clean.

Harry. Well said!—Be witty when you can; sarcastic you must be, in spite of your teeth. But I like you the better. You are honest. You are my cruet of Cayenne, and a sprinkling of you is excellent.

Sulky. Well, sir, when you know the state of your own affairs, and to what you have reduced the house, you will perhaps be less ready to grin.

Harry. Reduced the house! Ha, ha, ha!

Enter MR. DORNTON, with a Newspaper in his Hand.

Dorn. So, sir!

Harry. [Bowing.] I am happy to see you, sir.

Dorn. You are there, after having broken into my house at midnight!—And you are here, [Pointing to the Paper.] after having ruined me and my house by your unprincipled prodigality! Are you not a scoundrel?

Harry. No, sir: I am only a fool.

Sulky. Good night to you, gentlemen.

Dorn. Stay where you are, Mr. Sulky. I beg you to stay where you are, and be a witness to my solemn renunciation of him and his vices!

Sulky. I have witnessed it a thousand times.

Dorn. But this is the last. Are you not a scoundrel, I say?

Harry. I am your son.

Dorn. [Calling.] Mr. Smith! Bring in those deeds.

Enter MR. SMITH.

You will not deny you are an incorrigible squanderer?

Harry. I will deny nothing.

Dorn. A nuisance, a wart, a blot, a stain upon the face of nature!

Harry. A stain that will wash out, sir.

Dorn. A redundancy, a negation; a besotted sophisticated incumbrance; a jumble of fatuity; your head, your heart, your words, your actions, all a jargon; incoherent and unintelligible to yourself, absurd and offensive to others!

Sulky. The whirlwind is rising.

Harry. I am whatever you please, sir.

Dorn. Bills never examined, every thing bought on credit, the price of nothing asked ! Conscious you were weak enough to wish for baubles you did not want, and pant for pleasures you could not enjoy ; you had not the effrontery to assume the circumspect caution of common sense ! And to your other destructive follies, you must add the detestable vice of gaming !

Harry. These things, sir, are much easier done than defended.

Dorn. But here—Give me that parchment ! [*To MR. SMITH.*] The partners have all been summoned. Look, sir ! your name has been formally erased !

Harry. The partners are very kind.

Dorn. The suspicions already incurred by the known profligacy of a principal in the firm, the immense sums you have drawn, this paragraph, the run on the house it will occasion, the consternation of the whole city—

Harry. All very terrible, and some of it very true. [*Half aside.*]

Dorn. [*Passionately.*] Give me the will, Mr. Smith ! Give me the will ! Fond and foolish as I have been, read, and you will find I am at last restored to my senses !—If I should happily outlive the storm you have raised, it shall not be to support a prodigal, or to reward a gambler !—You are disinherited !—Read !

Harry. Your word is as good as the Bank, sir.

Dorn. I'll no longer act the doting father, fascinated by your arts.

Harry. I never had any art, sir, except the one you taught me.

Dorn. I taught you ! What ? Scoundrel ? What ?

Harry. That of loving you, sir.

Dorn. Loving me !

Harry. Most sincerely !

Dorn. [*Forgetting his Passion.*] Why, can you say, Harry—Rascal ! I mean, that you love me ?

Harry. I should be a rascal indeed if I did not, sir.

Dorn. Harry! Harry! [*Struggling with his Feelings.*] No; Confound me if I do!—Sir, you are a vile——

Harry. I know I am.

Dorn. And I'll never speak to you more. [*Going.*

Harry. Bid me good night, sir. Mr. Sulky here will bid me good night, and you are my father!—Good night, Mr. Sulky.

Sulky. Good night.

[*Exit.*

Harry. Come, sir.

Dorn. [*Struggling with Passion.*] I won't!—If I do!—

Harry. Reproach me with my follies, strike out my name, disinherit me, I deserve it all, and more—But say, good night, Harry!

Dorn. I won't!—I won't!—I won't!

Harry. Poverty is a trifle; we can whistle it off—But enmity—

Dorn. I will not!

Harry. Sleep in enmity? And who can say how soundly?—Come! good night.

Dorn. I won't! I won't! [*Runs off.*

Harry. Say you so?—Why then, my noble-hearted dad, I am indeed a scoundrel!

Re-enter MR. DORNTON.

Dorn. Good night! [*Exit.*

Harry. Good night! And Heaven eternally bless you, sir! Heigho! [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

The House of the WIDOW WARREN.

JENNY and MRS. LEDGER.

Jenny. I tell you, good woman, I can do nothing for you.

Mrs. L. Only let me see Mrs. Warren.

Jenny. And get myself snubbed. Not I indeed.

Enter SOPHIA, skipping.

Soph. La, Jenny! Yonder's my mamma, with a whole congregation of milliners, mantua-makers, mercers, haberdashers, lace-men, feather-men, and—and all the world, consulting about second mourning!

Jenny. I know it.

Soph. It will be six months to-morrow, since the death of my father-in-law.

Jenny. How you run on, miss!

Soph. What would my dear grandma' say, if she saw her! Why, she is even fonder of finery than I am!

Jenny. Sure, miss, you are not fond of finery?

Soph. Oh but I am—I wonder why she won't let me wear high-heeled shoes! I am sure I am old enough! I shall be eighteen next Christmas day, at midnight: which is only nine months and two days! And, since she likes to wear slips, and sashes, and ringlets and—nonsense, like a girl, why should not I have high heels, and gowns and festinis, and hoops,

and trains, and sweeps, [*Mimicking.*] and—like a woman?

Jenny. It's very true, what your mamma tells you, miss; you have been spoiled by your old fond grandmother, in Gloucestershire.

Soph. Nay, Jenny, I won't hear you call my dear grandma' names! Though every body told the loving old soul she would spoil me.

Jenny. And now your mamma has sent for you up to town, to finish your *edication*.

Soph. Yes; she began it the very first day. There was the staymaker sent for, to screw up my shapes; the shoemaker, to cripple my feet; the hair-dresser, to burn my hair; the jeweller, to bore my ears; and the dentist, to file my teeth.

Jenny. Ah! you came here such a hoyden! [*To MRS. LEDGER.*] What, an't you gone yet, mistress?

Soph. La, Jenny, how can you be so cross to people? What is the matter with this good woman?

Jenny. Oh! nothing but poverty.

Soph. Is that all? Here—[*Rummaging her Pocket.*]—give her this half crown, and make her rich.

Jenny. Rich indeed!

Soph. What, is not it enough? La, I am sorry I spent all my money yesterday! I laid it out in sweet-meats, cakes, a canary bird, and a poll parrot. But I hope you are not very, very poor?

Mrs. L. My husband served the late alderman five and twenty years. His master promised to provide for him; but his pitiless widow can see him thrown with a broken heart upon the parish.

Soph. O dear!—Stop!—Stop a bit! [*Running off.*] Be sure you don't go! [*Exit.*]

Enter MR. SULKY.

Sulky. Where's your mistress, girl?

Jenny. My name is Jane Cocket, sir.

Sulky. Where is your mistress?

Jenny. Busy, sir.

Sulky. Tell her to come down—Don't stare, girl, but go and tell your mistress I want her.

Jenny. [*Aside.*] Humph! Mr. Black and gruff!

[*Exit.*]

Enter SOPHIA, with great Glee.

Sophia. I've got it! Here! Take this, good woman; and go home and be happy! Take it, I tell you. [*Offering a Purse.*]

Sulky. Who is this? Mrs. Ledger! How does your worthy husband?

Mrs. L. Alack, sir, ill enough: likely to starve in his latter days.

Sulky. How! Starve?

Mrs. L. The Widow refuses to do any thing for him.

Sulk. Humph!

Mrs. L. Service, age, and honesty, are poor pleas, with affluence, ease, and Mrs. Warren.

Sulky. Humph!

Mrs. L. You, sir, I understand, are the late alderman's executor?

Sulky. I can't tell.

Mrs. L. Perhaps you may be able to serve my husband?

Sulky. I don't know—However, give my respects to him. He sha'n't starve: tell him that.

Soph. Nay, but take this in the mean time.

Sulky. Ay; take it, take it. [*Exit MRS. LEDGER, much affected.*] And who are you, Miss Charity?

Soph. Me, sir? Oh! I—I am my grandma's granddaughter.

Sulky. Humph!

Soph. Sophia Freelove.

Sulky. Oh!—The Widow's daughter by her first husband?

Soph. Yes, sir.

Enter JENNY.

Sulky. Where's your mistress?

Jenny. Coming, sir.—So, you have stolen your mamma's purse, miss?

Soph. La, don't say so! I only run away with it. She was bargaining for some smuggled lace with one of your acquaintance, and I thought I could dispose of her money to better advantage.

Jenny. Without her consent?

Soph. Yes, to be sure! I knew I should never dispose of it in that manner with her consent?

Jenny. Well! Here comes your mamma. *[Exit.*

Enter the WIDOW WARREN, in a fantastic girlish Morning Dress, surrounded by MILLINERS, MANTUA-MAKERS, FURRIERS, HATTERS, &c. with their ATTENDANTS, with Band-boxes; all talking as they come on.

Widow. So you'll be sure not to forget my chapeau à la Prusse, Mr. Mincing?

Hatter. Certainly not, madam.

Widow. And you'll make a delicate choice of the feathers?

Hatter. The selection shall be elegant, madam.

Widow. Yes—I know, Mr. Mincing, you're a charming man!—And you will let me have my pierrot à la Coblentz by nine in the morning, Mrs. Tiffany?

Mantua-Maker. To a minute, maim.

Sulky. Madam, when you have a moment's leisure——

Widow. Be quiet, you fright; don't interrupt me!—And my caraco à la hussar, and my bavaraises à la duchesse. And put four rows of pearl in my turban.

Mil. Ver vell, me ladyship.

Widow. And you'll all come together, exactly at nine?

Omnes. We'll all be here! [*Going.*]

Widow. And don't forget the white ermine tippets, and the black fox muffs, and the Kamschatka furs that you mentioned, Mr. Weazel!

Furrier. I'll bring a fine assortment, madam.

Widow. And, and, and—No! no—you may all go—I can think of nothing else—I shall remember more to-morrow.

Hattter and Furrier. } Thank you, madam!

Mantua-maker and Girls. } Very much obliged to you, maim!

Milliner. Dee ver good bon jour to me ladyship.

Altogether.

Widow. What was it you were saying, Mr. Sulky?—Pray, child, what have you done with my purse?

Soph. Given it away, ma'.

Widow. Given it away, minikin?

Soph. Yes, ma'.

Widow. Given my purse away? To whom? For what purpose?

Soph. La, ma', only—only to keep a poor woman from starving!

Widow. I protest, child, your grandmother has totally ruined you!

Sulky. Not quite, madam: she has left the finishing to you.

Widow. What were you saying, Mr. Sulky?

Sulky. You won't give me leave to say any thing, madam.

Widow. You know you are a shocking troublesome man, Mr. Sulky! I have a thousand things to remember, and can't bear teasing! It fatigues my spirits!

So, pray, relate this very urgent business of yours in a single word. What would you have?

Sulky. Justice.

Widow. Lord, what do you mean?—Do you think I am in the commission?

Sulky. Yes, of follies innumerable!

Widow. You are a sad savage, Mr. Sulky! And who is it you want justice for?

Sulky. Your late husband's son, John Milford.

Widow. Now, pray don't talk to me! You are a very intrusive person! You quite derange my ideas! I can think of nothing soft or satisfactory while you are present.

Sulky. Will you hear me, madam?

Widow. I can't! I positively can't! it is an odious subject!

Soph. Nah, ma', how can you be so cross to my brother Milford?

Widow. Your brother, child?—Country education!—How often, minikin, have I told you he is no brother of yours!

Soph. La, ma', he was your husband's son!

Widow. Yes, his——Faugh! Odious word!—Your brother?

Soph. Yes, that he is!—For he is in distress.

Sulky. Humph!

Widow. And would you, now—you who pretend to be a very prudent, ridiculous kind of a person—wish to see me squander the wealth of my poor dear dead good man on Mr. Milford, and his profligate companions?

Sulky. Not I, indeed, madam; though the profligate to whom you make love should happen to be one of them!

Widow. Ha, ha, ha! Oh the monster! I make love!—You have no eyes, Mr. Sulky! [*Walking and exhibiting herself.*] You are really blind!—But I know whom you mean.

Sulky. I mean young Dornton, madam.

Widow. To be sure you do!—Whom could you mean? Elegant youth!—Rapturous thoughts!

Soph. I am sure, sir, young Mr. Dornton is no profligate!

Sulky. [*Significantly.*] You are sure?

Soph. Yes, that I am!

Sulky. Humph.

Soph. And 'tis very scandalous, very scandalous indeed, to say he's my ma's lover!

Sulky. Humph!

Soph. Because he is a fine genteel young gentleman; and you know ma' is——

Widow. Pray, minikin, be less flippant with your tongue.

Soph. Why, la, ma', you yourself know you are too——

Widow. Go up to your chamber, child!

Soph. I am sure, ma' I say it is very scandalous to call the handsome Mr. Dornton your lover!

[*Exit, skipping.*]

Sulky. Do you blush?

Widow. Blush indeed?—Blush? Ha, ha, ha! You are a very unaccountable creature, Mr. Sulky!—Blush at the babbling of a child?

Sulky. Who is your rival?

Widow. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!—My rival!—The poor minikin!—My rival!—But I have a message for you; Now, do compose your features to softness and complacency! Look pleasant, if you can! Smile for once in your life!

Sulky. Don't make love to me! I'll have nothing to say to you!

Widow. Ha, ha, ha! Love!

Sulky. Yes, you make love to Dornton! Nay, you make love to the booby, Goldfinch! Even I am not secure in your company!

Widow. Ha, ha, ha! You are a shocking being, Mr. Sulky!—But, if you should happen to see Mr.

Dornton, do astonish your acquaintance : do a good-natured thing, and tell him I am at home all day—Love to you! Ha, ha, ha! Oh, you figure! You caricatura of tenderness! You insupportable thing!

[Exit.

Sulky. [Sighs.] Ah!—All labour in vain?

Enter JENNY.

Stand out of the way, girl! [Exit.

Jenny. There she goes! [Looking after the Widow.] That's lucky! This way, sir!

Enter HARRY DORNTON, followed by his own SERVANT, with Bills in his Hand.

Jenny. My mistress is gone up to her toilette, sir : but I can send you somebody you may like better!

[Exit.

Harry. Obliging Abigail! [Looking over his Papers.] 'Sdeath! What! all these tradesmen's bills?

Serv. All, sir. Mr. Smith sent me after you with them.

Harry. When where they brought?

Serv. Some last night, but most this morning.

Harry. Ill news travels fast, and honesty is devilish industrious. Go round to them all, return their bills, and bid them come themselves to-day. Has Mr. Williams, the hosier, sent in his bill?

Serv. No, sir.

Harry. I thought as much.—Tell him to come with the rest, and on his life not fail.

Serv. Very well, sir.

[Exit.

Enter SOPHIA, joyously.

Soph. Oh, Mr. Dornton, I am glad to see you! Do you know, I've got the song by heart that you was so good as to teach me!

Harry. And do you know, my charming Sophia,

you are the most delightful, beautiful, bewitching scholar that ever took lesson!

Soph. La, Mr. Dornton, I'm sure I'm very stupid!

Harry. That you are all intelligence, all grace, all wit!

Soph. To be sure, my ma' caught me singing it, and she was pettish; because you know it's all about love, and ends with a happy marriage.

Harry. But why pettish?

Soph. La! I can't tell. I suppose she wants to have all the marriage in the world to herself! It's her whole talk! I do believe she'd be married every morning that she rises, if any body would have her!

Harry. Think not of her, my sweet Sophia, but tell me——

Soph. What?

Harry. I dare not ask.

Soph. Why?

Harry. Lest I should offend you.

Soph. Nay, now, Mr. Dornton, that is not right of you! I am never offended with any body; and I am sure I should not be offended with you! My grandma' always said I was the best tempered girl in the world. What is it?

Harry. Were you—? [*Taking her Hand.*] Did you ever know what it is to love?

Soph. La, now, how could you ask one such a question?—You know very well one must not tell!—Besides, you know too one must not be in love.

Harry. Why not?

Soph. Because—because I'm but a girl?—My grandma' has told me a hundred times, it's a sin for any body to be in love, before they be a woman grown; full one and twenty; and I am not eighteen!

Harry. Love, they say, cannot be resisted.

Soph. Ah, but I have been taught better!—It may be resisted—Nobody need be in love, unless they

like: and so I won't be in love; for I won't wilfully do amiss. [*With great Positiveness.*] No! I won't love any person; though I should love him ever so dearly.

Harry. [*Aside.*] Angelic innocence!—[*Aloud.*] Right, lovely Sophia, guard your heart against seducers.

Soph. Do you know, it is full five weeks since Valentine's Day; and, because I'm not one and twenty, nobody sent me a valentine!

Harry. And did you expect one?

Soph. Nah—! I can't say but I did think—In Gloucestershire, if any young man happens to have a liking for a young woman, she is sure to hear of it on Valentine Day. But perhaps Valentine Day does not fall so soon here as it does in the country?

Harry. Why, it is possible you may yet receive a valentine.

Soph. Nay, now, but don't you go to think that I am asking for one; for that would be very wrong of me, and I know better. My grandma' told me I must never mention nor think of such things, till I am a woman, full one and twenty grown; and that if I were to find such a thing at my window, or under my pillow, or concealed in a plum-cake——

Harry. A plum-cake?

Soph. Yes: I assure you I have heard of a valentine sent baked in a plum-cake—And so I would not receive such a thing for the world; no, not from the finest man on earth, if I did not think him to be a true, and faithful, true, true lover.

Harry. But how must he prove his faith and truth?

Soph. Why, first he must love me very dearly!—With all his heart and soul!—And then he must be willing to wait till I am one and twenty.

Harry. And would not you love in return?

Soph. N—yes, when I come to be one and twenty.

Harry. Not sooner?

Soph. Oh, no!—I must not!

Harry. Surely you might if you pleased?

Soph. Oh, but you must not persuade me to that! If you do, I shall think you are a bad man; such as my grandma' warned me of!

Harry. And do you think me so?

Soph. Do I?—No!—I would not think you so, for a thousand thousand golden guineas!

Harry. [*Aside.*] Fascinating purity!—What am I about? To deceive or trifle with such unsuspecting affection, would indeed be villainy!

Goldfinch. [*Without at a Distance.*] Is she above? Must see her!

Soph. La, I hear that great, ridiculous, horse-jockey oaf Goldfinch, coming up!—[*Sighs.*] Good bye, Mr. Dornton!

Harry. Heaven bless you, Sophia! Sweet Sophia, Heaven bless you, my lovely angel!—Heigho!

Soph. Heigho!

[*Exit.*]

Gold. [*Without.*] Is she here?

Serv. [*Without.*] I don't know, sir.

Enter GOLDFINCH, in a High-collared Coat, several under Waistcoats, Buckskin Breeches, covering his Calves, short Boots, long Spurs, High-Crowned Hat, Hair in the extreme, &c. &c.

Gold. Ha! My tight one!

Harry. [*Surveying him.*] Well, Charles!

Gold. How you stare! An't I the go? That's your sort!

Harry. Ha, ha, ha!

Gold. Where's the Widow?

Harry. Gone up to dress, and will not be down these two hours.

Gold. A hundred to eighty, I'd sup up a string of

twenty horses in less time than she takes to dress her fetlocks, plait her mane, trim her ears, and buckle on her body-clothes?

Harry. You improve daily, Charles!

Gold. To be sure!—That's your sort!—[*Turning round to show himself.*] An't I a genius?

Harry. Quite an original!—You may challenge the whole fraternity of the whip to match you!

Gold. Match me! Newmarket can't match me! [*Showing himself.*]—That's your sort!

Harry. Oh no! Ha, ha, ha! You're harder to match than one of your own pied ponies.—A very different being from either your father or grandfather!

Gold. Father or grandfather!—Shakebags both.

Harry. How?

Gold. Father a sugar-baker, grandfather a slop-seller—I'm a gentleman—That's your sort!

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! And your father was only a man of worth.

Gold. Kept a gig! [*With great Contempt.*]—Knew nothing of life!—Never drove four!

Harry. No, but he was a useful member of society.

Gold. A usef—! What's that?

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! A pertinent question.

Gold. A gentleman like me a useful member of society!—Bet the long odds, nobody ever heard of such a thing!

Harry. You have not acquired your character in the world for nothing, Charles.

Gold. World!—What does the world say?

Harry. Strange things—It says you have got into the hands of jockeys, Jews, and swindlers: and that, though old Goldfinch was, in his day, one of the richest men on 'Change, his son will shortly become poorer than the poorest black-leg at Newmarket.

Gold. Damn the world!

Harry. With all my heart; damn the world; for it says little better of me.

Gold. Bet you seven to five the Eclipse colts against the Highflyers, the second spring meeting.

Harry. No: I have done with Highflyer and Eclipse too—So you are in pursuit of the Widow?

Gold. Full cry!—Must have her!

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Heigho! You must?

Gold. All up with me else! If I don't marry the Widow, I must smash!—I've secured the knowing one.

Harry. Whom do you mean! The maid?

Gold. Promised her a hundred on the wedding day.

Enter JENNY.

Jenny. My mistress can't see you at present, gentlemen.

Gold. Can't see me? [*Vexed.*] Take Harriet an airing in the phaeton.

Harry. What, is Harriet your favourite?

Gold. To be sure! I keep her!

Harry. You do?

Gold. Fine creature!

Harry. Well bred?

Gold. Just to my taste!—Like myself, free and easy. That's your sort!

Harry. A fine woman?

Gold. Prodigious! Sister to the Irish Giant! Six feet in her stockings!—That's your sort!—Sleek coat, flowing mane, broad chest, all bone!—Dashing figure in a phaeton!—Sky-blue habit, scarlet sash, green hat, yellow ribbands, white feathers, gold band and tassell—That's your sort!

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Heigho!—Why you are a high fellow, Charles!

Gold. To be sure!—Know the odds!—Hold four in hand—Turn a corner in style!—Reins in form—Elbows square—Wrist pliant—Hayait!—Drive the Coventry stage twice a week all summer:—Pay for an inside place—Mount the box—Tip the coachy a crown—Beat the mail—Come in full speed;—Rattle down the gate-way!—Take care of your heads!—Never killed but one woman and a child in all my life—That's your sort! [Going.]

Jenny. [*Aside to GOLDFINCH.*] Take him with you. [Exit.]

Gold. Want a hedge;—Take guineas to pounds, Precipitate against Dragon:

Harry. No.

Gold. [*Aside.*] Wish I could have him a few!—Odd or even for fifty? [*Drawing his hand clenched from his Pocket.*]

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! Odd enough!

Gold. Will you cut a card, hide in the hat, chuck in the glass, draw cuts, heads or tails, gallop the maggot, swim the hedgehog, any thing?

Harry. Nothing.

Gold. I'm up to all—That's your sort!—Get him with me, and pigeon him. [*Aside.*] Come and see my Greys—Been to Tattersall's and bought a set of six—Smokers!—Beat all England for figure, bone, and beauty!—Hayait, charmers!—That's your sort! Bid for two pair of mouse ponies for Harriet.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! The Irish Giantess drawn by mouse ponies!

Gold. Come and see 'em.

Harry. [*Sarcastically.*] No. I am weary of the company of stable-boys.

Gold. Why so?—Shan't play you any tricks—If they squirt water at you, or make the colts kick you, tell me, and I'll horsewhip 'em—Arch dogs! Deal of wit!

Harry. When they do, I'll horsewhip them myself.

Gold. Yourself?—Ware that—Wrong there!

Harry. I think I should be right.

Gold. Do you?—What—Been to school?

Harry. To school!—Why yes—I—

Gold. Mendoza!—Oh!—Goodmorrow! [Exit.

Harry. Ha, ha, ha! There goes one of my friends!
Heigho!

Enter MILFORD, in haste, followed by GOLDFINCH, returning.

Gold. What is it, Jack?—Tell me! [Eagerly.

Milf. Come, Harry! we shall be too late! They are about to begin! We may have what bets we please!

Gold. Where?—What?

Milf. The great match! The famous Frenchman, and Will, the marker! A thousand guineas aside!

Gold. What, tennis?

Milf. Yes. The Frenchman gives fifteen and a bisque.

Gold. To Will, the marker?

Milf. Yes.

Gold. Will for a hundred!

Milf. Done!

Gold. Done, done!

Harry. I bar the bet—the odds are five to four already.

Gold. What, for the mounseer?

Harry. Yes.

Gold. I'll take it,—five hundred to four.—

Harry. Done!

Gold. Done, done!

Harry. No, I bar!—I forgot—I have cut. I'll never bet another guinea.

Milf. You do, for a hundred!

Harry. Done!

Milf. Done, done!—Ha, ha, ha!

Harry. Pshaw!

Gold. What a cake!

Milf. But you'll go?

Harry. No.

Milf. Yes, you will.—Come, come, the match is begun! Every body is there! The Frenchman is the first player in the world!

Harry. It's a noble exercise!

Milf. Ay, Cato himself delighted in it!

Harry. Yes, it was much practised by the Romans.

Gold. The Romans! who are they?

Harry. Ha, ha, ha!

Milf. Ha, ha, ha!—Will you go, or will you not, Harry?

Harry. I can't, Jack. My conscience won't let me.

Milf. Pshaw, ! Zounds ! if we don't make haste, it will be all over!

Harry. [*In a Hurry.*] Do you think it will? [*Stops short.*] No—I won't—I must not.

Milf. [*Taking hold of his Arm.*] Come along, I tell you!

Harry. No.

Milf. They have begun!

Gold. Have they?—I'm off! [*Exit.*

Milf. [*Still struggling, and HARRY retreating.*] What folly!—Come along!

Harry. No—I will not.

Milf. [*Leaving him, and going.*] Well, well, if you're so positive——

Harry. [*Calling.*] Stay, Jack, stay—I'll walk up the street with you, but I won't go in.

Milf. Double or quits, the hundred that you won of me last night, you do!

Harry. I don't, for a thousand!

Milf. No, no, the hundred!

Harry. I tell you I won't. I won't go in with you.

Milf. Done, for the hundred!

Harry. Done, done! [Exit.]

SCENE II.

The Parlour of the Tennis-court.

MARKERS *passing and repassing, with Rackets and Balls.*

SHERIFF'S OFFICER, *Two FOLLOWERS, and One of the*
MARKERS.—*Shout.*

Marker. Hurrah!

Officer. Pray, is Mr. Milford in the court?

Marker. I'll bet you, gold to silver, the Frenchman loses!—Hurrah! [Exit.]

Enter MR. SMITH, from the Court.

Mr. Smith. He is not there.

Officer. Are you sure?

Mr. Smith. The crowd is very great, but I can neither see him, nor any of his companions.

Officer. Then he will not come.

Mr. Smith. I begin to hope so!

Officer. [Examining his Writ.] *Middlesex to wit—*
One thousand pounds—Dornton against John Milford.

Mr. Smith. You must take none but substantial bail. [Shout.] What a scene!

Officer. He will not be here.

Mr. Smith. Heaven send—

Enter GOLDFINCH and a MARKER, running across.

Gold. Is the match begun?

Marker. The first game is just over.

Gold. Who lost?

Marker. The Frenchman!

Gold. Hurrah!

Marker. Hurrah!

Gold. Damn the mounseers!—That's your sort!

[*Exit into the Court.*]

Mr. Smith. That's one of his companions. I begin to tremble——Stand aside;—here they both come!

Officer. Which is he?

Mr. Smith. The second.

[*Shout.*]

Enter HARRY DORNTON and MILFORD, in haste.

Harry. I hear them! I hear them! Come along!

Milf. Ha, ha, ha!—Harry!—You would not go!
You were determined!

[*Shout.*]

Harry. Zounds!—Come along!

[*Exit in Haste—MILFORD follows him, laughing.*]

Officer. [*Stopping him.*] A word with you, sir, if you please.

Milf. With me!—Who are you?—What do you want?

Officer. You are my prisoner.

Milf. Prisoner!—Damnation!—Let me go!

Officer. I must do my duty, sir.

Milf. Here, here—this is your duty.

[*Pulling out his Purse.*]

Mr. Smith. [*Advancing.*] It must not be, sir.

Milf. Mr. Smith!—What, at the suit of Dornton?

Mr. Smith. Yes, sir. 'Tis your own fault, for leading his son to these places: he heard you were to bring him here.

Milf. Furies!—Marker! [*To a MARKER passing.*]
Tell Harry Dornton to come to me instantly!

Marker. Yes, sir.

[*Exit.*]

[*Shout.*]

Milf. Zounds! Let me but go and see the match—

Mr. Smith. You must not, sir.

Milf. [To another MARKER.] Marker!

Marker. Sir!

Milf. Who wins?

Marker. The Frenchman has the best on't.

Milf. Tell Harry Dornton I am here in trouble.
Desire him to come this moment.

Marker. Very well, sir. [Shout.]

Milf. [To the OFFICER.] I'll give you ten guineas
for five minutes!

Mr. Smith. Take him away, sir.

Officer. You must come along, sir.

Milf. [To a MARKER returning.] Have you told
him?

Marker. He can't come, sir.

Milf. Very well, Harry! Very well! [To the SECOND
MARKER.] Well, sir?

Marker. He would not leave the Court for a thou-
sand pounds.

Officer. Come, come, sir! [To his Two ATTEND-
ANTS.] Bring him along!

Milf. Hands off, scoundrels! [Shout.] Fiends!
[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

The House of MR. SILKY.

*A room of Business, Ledger, Letter-files, Ink-stands,
&c.*

SILKY discovered, and JACOB entering.

Silky. Well, Jacob! Have you been?

Jacob. Yes, sir.

Silky. Well, and what news? How is he?—Very
bad?

Jacob. Dead, sir.

Silky. [*Overjoyed.*] Dead?

Jacob. As Deborah!

Silky. [*Aside.*] I'm a lucky man! [*Aloud.*] Are you sure he is dead, Jacob?

Jacob. I saw him with my own eyes, sir.

Silky. That's right, Jacob! I am a lucky man! And what say the people at the hotel? Do they know who he is?

Jacob. Oh yes, sir!—He was rich! A gentleman in his own country!

Silky. And did you take care they should not know you?

Jacob. To be sure, sir! You had given me my lesson!

Silky. Ay, ay, Jacob! That's right!—You are a fine boy! Mind me, and I'll make a man of you!—And you think they had heard nothing of his having called on me?

Jacob. Not a word!

Silky. [*Aside.*] It was a lucky mistake! [*Aloud.*] Well, Jacob! Keep close! Don't say a word, and I'll give you—I'll give you a crown!

Jacob. You promised me a guinea, sir!

Silky. Did I, Jacob? Did I? Well, well! I'll give you a guinea! But be close! Did you call at the Widow Warren's?

Jacob. Yes, sir.

Silky. And will she see me?

Jacob. She desires you will be there in an hour.

Silky. Very well, Jacob—Keep close! Not a word about the foreign gentleman, or his having been here a week ago, or his being taken suddenly ill, and dying!

Aside.] It is a lucky stroke!—Close, Jacob, my boy!

Jacob. But give me the guinea, sir.

Silky. What, now, Jacob?

Jacob. If you please, sir. You may forget—

Silky. Well, there, Jacob! there! You'll be a rich man, Jacob! A cunning fellow! I read it in your countenance, Jacob! Close, Jacob, and then!—

Jacob. Perhaps you'll give me another?

Silky. Well said, Jacob! You'll be a great man! Mind what I say to you, and you'll be a great man!—Here's somebody coming! Go, Jacob! Close!

Jacob. And another guinea?

[*Exit.*

Silky. This is a lucky stroke!

Enter GOLDFINCH.

So, Mr. Goldfinch! What do you want?

Gold. Money—A thousand pounds directly.

Silky. Fine talking, Mr. Goldfinch! Money's a scarce commodity! Times are ticklish!

Gold. Tellee I must have it.

Silky. Give me but good security, and you know I'm your friend.

Gold. Yes; good security and fifty per cent.

Silky. Why look you there now! For all you know the last annuity I had of you, I gave a full hundred more than was offered by your friend Aaron the Jew!

Gold. My friend! Your friend! You colleague together.

Silky. Hear you now! For all you know I have always been your friend; always supplied you with money, have not I? And when I saw you running to ruin, I never told you of it, did I? I was willing to make all things easy!

Gold. Easy enough! You have pretty well eased me!

Silky. There is your companion, Jack Milford: I shall be a heavy loser by him!

Gold. Ah! It's all up with poor Jack! He's fixed at last!

Silky. What do you mean?

Gold. Old Dornton has sent the Nab-man after him!

Silky. And arrested him?

Gold. Yes, he's touch'd!

Silky. [Calling.] Jacob!

Enter JACOB.

Run as fast as you can to my good friend, Mr. Straw-shoe, the attorney, and tell him to take out detainers for all the debts I have bought up against Mr. Milford! Make haste!

Jacob. Yes, sir.

[Exit.

Gold. I thought you were Jack Milford's friend, too!

Silky. So I am, Mr. Goldfinch; but I must provide for my family!

Gold. Come, come!—The bit!—Tellee I want the coal directly! Sale at Tattersall's to-morrow morning! Three Pot eight O brood mares with each an Eclipse colt! Would not lose 'em for all Lombard Street! So will you let me have the bit?

Silky. Dear, dear! I tell you I can't, Mr. Goldfinch.

Gold. Then some other Jew must.

Silky. Jew! Hear you! Hear you! This it is to be the friend of an ungrateful spendthrift! Calls me Jew! I, who go to morning prayers every day of my life, and three times to tabernacle on a Sunday!

Gold. Yes! You cheat all day, tremble all night, and act the hypocrite the first thing in the morning.

[Going.

Silky. Nay, but stay, Mr. Goldfinch! Stay! I want to talk to you!—I have a scheme to make a man of you!

Gold. What? Bind me 'prentice to a usurer?

Silky. Pshaw! You are in pursuit of the Widow Warren?

Gold. Well?

Silky. Now what will you give me, and I'll secure her to you?

Gold. You?

Silky. I!

Gold. Which way?

Silky. I have a deed in my power, I won't tell you what, but I have it, by which I can make her marry the man I please, or remain a widow all her life; and that I'm sure she will never do if she can help it.

Gold. You a deed?

Silky. Yes, I.

Gold. Show it me!

Silky. Not for twenty thousand pounds!—Depend upon me, I have it! I tell you that I'm your friend, and you shall have her! That is, on proper conditions—If not, Mr. Goldfinch, you shall not have her!

Gold. Indeed, old Judas! Well, what are your conditions?

Silky. I find the late alderman died worth a hundred and fifty thousand pounds!

Gold. Ay?

Silky. Every farthing, Mr. Goldfinch! And my conscience tells me that, risk and character and all things considered, I must come in for my thirds.

Gold. Your conscience tells you that?

Silky. Yes, it does, Mr. Goldfinch!—Fifty thousand is a fair price.

Gold. For the soul of a miser.

Silky. If you'll join me, say so.

Gold. Fifty thousand?

Silky. Not a farthing less!—What, will there not be a hundred thousand remaining?

Gold. Why, that's true!—It will cut a fine dash!

Silky. To be sure it will!—Come with me; I'll draw up a sketch of an agreement. After which, we must fight cunning—The Widow is a vain, weak woman—You must get her written promise!

Gold. Written?

Silky. Under her own hand ; with a good round penalty in case of forfeiture.

Gold. Well said, old one !

Silky. Not less than twenty thousand pounds ! A jury would grant half !

Gold. Why, you're a good one !

Silky. That would secure something, and we would snack !

Gold. Damme, you're a deep one !

Silky. Ah, ha, ha, ha ! Do you think I am, Mr. Goldfinch ?—Signed on stamp !

Gold. You know a thing or two !

Silky. Ah, ha, ha, ha ! Do you think I do, Mr. Goldfinch ?

Gold. You can teach 'em to bite the bubble !

Silky. Ah, ha, ha, ha ! You joke, Mr. Goldfinch, you joke !

Gold. But the devil will have you at last !

Silky. Lord forbid, Mr. Goldfinch ! Don't terrify me !—I hate the Devil, Mr. Goldfinch, indeed I do ! I hate the name of him !—Heaven keep me out of his fiery clutches !

Gold. No, he has you safe enough !—Bait his trap but with a guinea, and he is sure to find you nibbling.

Silky. Don't talk about the devil, Mr. Goldfinch ! Pray don't. But think about the Widow—secure her.

Gold. I must have the coal though this evening ?

Silky. Don't lose a moment, Mr. Goldfinch !

Gold. Must not lose the Eclipse colts !

Silky. Pshaw, Mr. Goldfinch ; think less of the colts, and more of the Widow ! Get her promise in black and white !

[GOLDFINCH going,

Gold. [Turns.] Tellee I must have 'em !

Silky. All will then be safe !

Gold. Must have 'em.

[Exeunt.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The House of the WIDOW WARREN.

Enter JENNY and SOPHIA, meeting.

Jenny. O, miss! I have got something for you!

Soph. Something for me!—What is it? What is it?

Jenny. [*Her hand behind her.*] What will you give me?

Soph. O, I'll give you——[*Feeling in her Pocket.*] La, I've got no money! But I'll give you a kiss, and owe you a sixpence.

Jenny. No—A shilling without the kiss.

Soph. Well, well, a shilling.

Jenny. There then. [*Giving her a small Parcel.*

Soph. La! what is it? [*Reads.*] *To Miss Sophia Freelove.*—And such a beautiful seal!—It's a pity to break it. [*Opening the Paper.*] La! nothing but a plum-cake!

Jenny. Is that all?

Soph. [*Considering.*] Ecod! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!—I do think—as sure as sixpence, it is!—It is——

Jenny. Is what?

Soph. O, la, it is!

Jenny. What's the matter with the girl?

Soph. Ecod, Jenny, it is the most curious plum-cake you ever saw!

Jenny. I see nothing curious about it!

Soph. O, but you shall see!—Give me a knife!—O, no, that would spoil all!—Look you, Jenny, look! Do but look!—*[Breaks open the Cake, and finds a Valentine.]* Ha, ha, ha, ha! I told you so! The sweet, dear——*[Kisses it.]* Did you ever see such a plum-cake in your whole life, Jenny?—And look here!—*[Opening the Valentine.]* Oh, how beautiful!—The shape of a honey-suckle!—What should that mean?—And two doves cooing!—But here! Here's the writing!

The woodbine sweet, and turtle dove,
Are types of chaste and faithful love.
Ah! Were such peace and truth but mine,
I'd gladly be your valentine!

[Repeating.] Were such peace and truth but mine!—La, now, Mr. Dornton, you know they are yours!

Jenny. So, so! Mr. Dornton sends you valentines, miss?

Soph. O yes, Jenny! He is the kindest, sweetest, handsomest gentleman!

Jenny. You must give me that valentine, miss.

Soph. Give it you?

Jenny. Yes—that I may show it your mamma.

Soph. Indeed, but don't you think it! I would not give you this tiny bit of paper, no, not for a diamond as big—as big as the whole world!—And if you were to tell ma', and she were to take it from me, I'd never love you, nor forgive you, as long as I live!

Jenny. O, but indeed, miss, I'm not obliged to keep secrets for nothing.

Soph. Nah, Jenny, you know I am very good to you.—And here—Here—Don't tell ma', and I'll give you this silver thimble. *[Exit JENNY.]*

Enter WIDOW WARREN *and* MR. SULKY.

Widow. You are a very shocking person, Mr Sulky! —The wild man of the woods broke loose! Do return to your keeper, good Orang Outang; and don't go about to terrify children!

Sulky. I tell you, madam, Mr. Milford is arrested.

Soph. My brother?

Sulky. Locked up at a bailiff's in the next street.

Soph. O dear!

Widow. And, pray now, what is that to me?

Sulky. Madam!

Widow. I am not arrested.

Sulky. Would you were!

Widow. Oh! the savage!

Sulky. The pitiless only should feel pain: The stony-hearted alone should be enclosed by walls of stone.

Soph. Don't be cross with ma', sir; I'm sure she'll release my brother.

Widow. You are sure, minikin!

Soph. Yes, ma'; for I am sure no soul on earth would suffer a fellow creature to lie and pine to death, in a frightful dark dungeon, and fed with bread and water.

Sulky. Your late husband recommended the payment of his son's debts.

Widow. Recommended?

Sulky. Yes.

Widow. But leaving it to my own prudence.

Sulky. More's the pity.

Widow. Which prudence I shall follow,

Sulky. It will be the first time in your life—You never yet followed prudence, you always ran before it.

Soph. Nah, come, dear ma', I am sure you have a pitiful heart! I am sure you could not rest in your bed, if my poor brother was in prison!

Widow. Hold your prattle, child!

Soph. Ah, I am sure you'll make him happy, and pay his debts!

Widow. Why, Jenny!

[*Calling.*

Sulky. You won't?

Widow. Jenny!

Enter JENNY.

Soph. La, dear sir, have patience——

Sulky. You are an angel!—And you are——

[*Exit.*

Soph. Nay, pray, sir, do stay! [*Exit, following.*

Widow. I am glad the monster is gone. He is a very intolerable person!—Pray, Jenny, how did it happen, that Mr. Dornton went away without seeing me?

Enter SERVANT and MR. SILKY.

Serv. Mr. Silky, madam.

Widow. Leave us, Jenny. [*Exit JENNY.*] So, Mr. Silky—What is this very urgent business of yours?

Silky. [*Looking round.*] Are we safe, madam? Will nobody interrupt us; nobody overhear us?

Widow. No, no—But what is the meaning of all this caution?

Silky. [*After fastening the Door, and carefully drawing the Will from his Pocket.*] Do you know this hand-writing, madam?

Widow. Ah!—It is my poor old dear man's, I see.

Silky. You have heard of a will he left in France?

Widow. Pshaw!—Will, indeed!—He left no will!

Silky. Yes, he did, madam.

Widow. I won't believe it!—He loved me too well to rob me of a single guinea!—Poor simple soul! I was his darling!

Silky. His darling, madam!—With your permission, I will just read a single clause in which his darling is mentioned.—Look, madam, it is the Alderman's

hand ! [*Reads.*] *But as I have sometimes painfully suspected, the excessive affection, which my said wife, Winifred Warren, professed for me during my decline, and that the solemn protestations she made never to marry again, should she survive me, were both done with sinister views, it is my will, that, should she marry, or give a legal promise of marriage, written or verbal, that she shall be cut off with an annuity of six hundred a year : and the residue of my effects, in that case, to be equally divided between my natural son, John Milford, and my wife's daughter, Sophia Freelove.*

Widow. Six hundred a year ! An old dotard !—Brute !—Monster !—I hate him now, as heartily as when he was alive !—But, pray, sir, how came you by this will ?

Silky. Why, it was odd enough ! And yet easy enough !—My name is Silky, madam——

Widow. Well ?

Silky. And you know the executor's name is Sulky——

Widow. Well ?

Silky. The gentleman, that delivered it, only made a mistake of a letter, and gave it to Mr. Silky, instead of Mr. Sulky !

Widow. And where is that gentleman ?

Silky. Ah, poor man !—He is dead !

Widow. Dead ?

Silky. And gone !

Widow. And does Mr. Sulky know of this will being delivered ?

Silky. Not a syllable !—it's all close and smooth !

Widow. So much the better.—Come, give it me, and——

Silky. Excuse me there madam ; I can't do that !

Widow. Why so ?

Silky. My conscience won't let me ! I must provide for my family !

Widow. And, pray, what provision is this will to make for your family, Mr. Silky?

Silky. Why, madam, I have a proposal—You know the power of your own charms!

Widow. Which, I believe, is more than you do, Mr. Silky.

Silky. Hah! don't say so, madam! Don't say so!—Would I were a handsome, rich, and well-born youth!—But you know Mr. Goldfinch?—Ah, ha, ha, ha! I could tell you a secret——

Widow. What, that he is dying for me, I suppose?

Silky. Ah!—So smitten!—Talks of nothing else;

Widow. And is that any secret, think you?

Silky. The Alderman, I find, died worth more than a plumb and a half——

Widow. Well?

Silky. I have talked the matter over with my friend Mr. Goldfinch; and he thinks it but reasonable, that, for a secret of so much importance, which would almost sweep the whole away, I should receive one third.

Widow. Fifty thousand pounds, Mr. Silky?

Silky. I can't take less.

Widow. Why you are a greater rogue than even I thought you!

Silky. Lord, madam, it's no roguery! It's only a knowledge of the world!—A young husband, with a hundred thousand pounds, or poor six hundred a year, without any husband!

Widow. You are a very shocking old miser, Mr. Silky! A very repulsive sort of a person! What heart you had, is turned to stone! You are insensible of the power of a pair of fine eyes!—But I have made a conquest that places me beyond your reach—I mean to marry Mr. Dornton.

Silky. [Surprised.] What! old Mr. Dornton, madam?

Widow. Old Mr. Dornton, man?—I never saw the figure in my life! No! the gay and gallant young Mr. Dornton! The pride of the city, and the lawful monarch of my bleeding heart!

Silky. Ha, ha, ha! Young Mr. Dornton!

Widow. So you may take your will, and light your fires with it! You will not make a penny of it in any other way. Mr. Sulky, the executor, is Mr. Dornton's partner, and when I marry Mr. Dornton, he will never inflict the absurd penalty.

Silky. Ha, ha, ha! No, madam, when you marry Mr. Dornton, that he certainly never will! But if any accident should happen to prevent the match, you will then let me hear from you?

Widow. Lord, good man! don't mention the horrid idea!—Do leave me to my delightful meditations; I would indulge in soft sensibility and dreams of bliss; and not be disturbed by dead men's wills, or the sordid extortions of an avaricious old rogue!

Silky. Very well, madam! The secret, for the present, remains between ourselves. You'll be silent for your own sake. Only remember, ha, ha, ha, if you should want me, I live at number 40. My name is on the door. —Ha, ha, ha! Mr. Dornton! —Good morning, madam.—Mr. Dornton! ha, ha, ha!—You'll send if you should want me!

[Exit, laughing.]

[Calling.]

Widow. Jenny!

Enter JENNY.

Jenny. Ma'am!

Widow. As I was saying, Jenny—pray how did it happen, that Mr. Dornton went away without seeing me?

Jenny. Indeed, ma'am, I don't know.

Widow. Cruel youth!

Jenny. I'm sure, ma'am, I wonder how you can like him better than Mr. Goldfinch!

Widow. Mr. Goldfinch is very well, Jenny—But Dornton!—Oh, incomparable!

Jenny. I am sure, ma'am, if I was a rich lady, and a handsome lady, and a fine lady, like you, I should say, Mr. Goldfinch for my money.

Widow. Should you, Jenny?—Well, I don't know—
[*Languishing.*]

Goldfinch. [*Without.*] Tellee, I must see her.

Widow. As I live, here he comes!—He is such a boisterous person! [*Goes to the Glass.*] How do I look, Jenny? I protest my face is of all colours!

Jenny. [*Significantly, after examining.*] You had better go up to your toilette, for a minute.

Widow. That smooth-tongued old extortioner, has put me into such a fluster! Don't let him go, Jenny.

Jenny. Never fear, ma'am.

Widow. I'll not stay too long. [Exit.]

*Enter GOLDFINCH, his Clothes, Hat, and Boots
dirtied by a Fall.*

Gold. Here I am—All alive!

Jenny. Dear!—What is the matter?

Gold. Safe and sound!—Fine kick up!

Jenny. Have you been thrown?

Gold. Pitched five and twenty feet into a ditch—Souse!

Jenny. Dear me!

Gold. Pretty commence!—No matter—Limbs whole—Heart sound—That's your sort!

Jenny. Where did it happen?

Gold. Bye road—Back of Islington—Had them tight in hand too—Came to a short turn and a narrow lane—Up flew a damned dancing-master's umbrella—Bounce!—Off they went—Road repairing—Wheelbarrow in the way—Crash—Out flew I—Whizz—Fire flashed Lay stunned—Got up—Looked foolish—shafts broke—Snarler and Blackguard both down—Black-and-all-black paying away, pannels smashed, traces cut, Snarler lamed.

Jenny. Terrible!

Gold. Damned mad!—Cursed a few—cut up Black-and-all-black—Horsewipped Tom—took coach, and drove here like a Devil in a whirlwind!

Jenny. 'Tis very well your neck's not broke!

Gold. Little stiff—No matter—Damn all dancing-masters, and their umbrellas!

Jenny. You had better have been here, Mr. Goldfinch.—You stand so long shilly shally, that you'll be cut out at last.—If you had but a licence now in your pocket, I'd undertake to have you married in half an hour.

Gold. Do you think so?

Jenny. Think!—I'm sure on't.

Gold. Damme, I'll post away and get one—Must not lose her—The game's up if I do!—Must have her!—Be true to me, and I'll secure you the hundred!—I'll be back from the Commons in a smack!

Enter the WIDOW WARREN.

Gold. Ah, Widow! Here am I!

[Runs up to her, kisses her boisterously, and dirties her Clothes. —Exit JENNY.]

Widow. I protest, Mr. Goldfinch—Was ever the like! *[Looking at herself.]*

Gold. Never mind, brush off—I'm the lad!—Been to Hatchet's—Bespoke the wedding coach—

Widow. But—sir—

Gold. Pannels stripe painted—Hammer-cloth fringed—Green and white—Curtains festooned—Patent wheels—Silver furniture—All flash—Light as a band-box—Trundle and spin after my greys, like a tandem down hill—Pass—Show 'em the road—Whurr—Whizz-gig—That's your sort!

Widow. It will be superb!

Gold. Superb!—*[With Contempt.]* Tellee, it will be the thing—The go—The stare—The gape—The gaze!—The rich Widow and the tight one—There they go

—Away they bowl—That's your sort—I'm the boy that shall drive you——

Widow. Pardon me, Mr. Goldfinch; if a certain event were, by the wise disposition of Providence, to take place, I should think proper to drive.

Gold. You drive!—If you do, damn me!

Widow. Sir!

Gold. I'm christened and called Charles—Charles Goldfinch—The knowing lad that's not to be had—Winter and summer—Fair weather and foul—Low ruts or no ruts—Never take a false quarter—No, no, Widow—I drive—Hayait!—Ah—Ah—Get on!—St—St—Touch Whitefoot in the flank—Tickle Snarler in the ear—Cut up the Yelper—Take out a fly's eye—Smack, crack—That's your sort!

Widow. I assure you, Mr. Goldfinch, you entertain very improper suppositions concerning——

Gold. Go for the licence—— [Going.

Widow. Nay, but surely, Mr.——

Gold. Go for the licence—Resolved—Taken it here. [Pointing to his Forehead.

Widow. If retrospect and—and affection threw no other obstacles in the way—Yet the—the world—Prudence ——

Gold. The world!—Prudence!—Damn the world—Damn prudence!

Widow. Oh, but sir——

Gold. The world nor nobody else has nothing to do with neither your prudence nor mine.—We'll be married immediately——

Widow. Immediately? Mr. Goldfinch—I—

[Undecided.

Gold. What, you won't?

Widow. Nay, Mr. Goldfinch!—I—do not—absolutely renunciate—But I—wish——

Gold. It was over—Know you do—Go for the licence——

Widow. Pray—Dear Mr. Goldfinch——

Gold. Go for the licence, I tellee.

Widow. Only a word——

Gold. To the wise—I'm he—Go for the licence—
That's your sort! [Exit.

Widow. Mr. Goldfinch! I declare——

[Exit following.]

SCENE II.

MR. DORNTON'S House.

MR. DORNTON and MR. SMITH.

Dorn. Still the same hurry, the same crowd, Mr. Smith?

Mr. Smith. Much the same, sir;—the house never experienced a day like this!—Mr. Sulky thinks we shall never get through.

Dorn. Is Milford taken?

Mr. Smith. Yes, sir.

Dorn. Unprincipled prodigal!—My son owes his ruin to him alone!—But he shall suffer!

Mr. Smith. My young master's tradesmen are waiting.

Dorn. Bid them come in. [Exit MR. SMITH.] 'All my own fault, my own fond folly! Denied him nothing!—encouraged him to spend.

Re-enter MR. SMITH, followed by TRADESMEN.

Mr. Smith. This way, gentlemen.

Dorn. Zounds! what an army!—A vile thoughtless profligate!

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. [To MR. DORNTON.] You are wanted in the counting-house, sir.

Dorn. Very well.—I'll be with you in a moment, gentlemen——Abandoned spendthrift!

[Exit, followed by MR. SMITH.]

1 *Trades.* I don't like all this!—What does it mean?

2 *Trades.* Danger!

3 *Trades.* He has been a good customer—None of your punctual paymasters, that look over their accounts.

1 *Trades.* O, a different thing! Nothing to be got by them—Always take care to affront them.

2 *Trades.* Perhaps, it is a trick of the old gentleman, to inspect into our charges.

3 *Trades.* I don't like that—Rather hear of any tax than of taxing my bill.

1 *Trades.* Humph! Tradesmen begin to understand these things, and allow a reasonable profit.

2 *Trades.* Can't have less than fifty per cent. for retail credit trade!

3 *Trades.* To be sure not;—if a man would live in style, and save a fortune, as he ought.

1 *Trades.* Hush! Mind—All devilish hard run!

Omnes. Certainly!

1 *Trades.* Not a guinea in the house!—To-morrow's Saturday—Hem!

Re-enter MR. DORNTON.

Dorn. Your servant, gentlemen, your servant.—Pray, how happens it that you bring your accounts in here?

1 *Trades.* We received notice, sir.

Dorn. You have none of you any demands upon me?

1 *Trades.* Happy to serve you, sir.

2 *Trades.* We shall all be glad of your custom, sir.

Omnes. All, all!

Dorn. And do you come expecting to be paid?

1 *Trades.* Money, sir, is always agreeable!

2 *Trades.* Tradesmen find it a scarce commodity!

3 *Trades.* Bills come round quick!

4 *Trades.* Workmen must eat!

2 *Trades.* For my part, I always give a gentleman, who is a gentleman, his own time.

Dorn. I understand you!—And what are you, sir, who seem to stand apart from the rest?

Hosier. A hosier, sir. I am unworthy the company of these honest gentlemen, who live in style. I never affront a punctual paymaster, not I: and, what they will think strange, I get more by those, who do look over their bills, than those who do not!

1 *Trades.* Humph!

2 *Trades.* Blab!

3 *Trades.* Shab!

} *Aside.*

Dorn. And what may be the amount of your bill, sir?

Hosier. A trifle, for which I have no right to ask.

Dorn. No right!—What do you mean?

Hosier. Your son, sir, made me what I am; redeemed me and my family from ruin; and it would be an ill requital of his goodness, to come here, like a dun, at such a time as this; when I would rather, if that could help him, give him every shilling I have in the world,

Dorn. Would you? Would you? [*Greatly affected.*]
—You look like an honest man!—But what do you do here then?

Hosier. Mr. Dornon, sir, knew I should be unwilling to come, and sent me word he would never speak to me more, if I did not; and, rather than offend him, I would even come here on a business like this.

Dorn. [*Shakes him by the Hand.*] You are an honest fellow! An unaccountable!—And so Harry has been your friend?

Hosier. Yes, sir; a liberal-minded friend; for he lent me money, though I was sincere enough to tell him of his faults.

Dorn. Zounds, sir! How came you to be a weaver of stockings?

Hosier. I don't know, sir, how I came to be at all; I only know that here I am.

Dorn. A philosopher!

Hosier. I am not fond of titles, sir—I'm a man.

Dorn. Why, is it not a shame, now, that the soul of Socrates should have crept and hid itself in the body of a stocking-weaver? Give me your bill!

Hosier. Excuse me, sir.

Dorn. Give me your bill, I tell you! I'll pay this bill myself.

Hosier. I cannot, must not, sir.

Dorn. Sir, I insist on—

Enter HARRY DORNTON.

So, sir! [*Turning angrily round.*] Why have you assembled these people into whose debt you have dishonestly run, wanting the power to pay; and who have as dishonestly trusted you, hoping to profit exorbitantly by your extravagance?

Harry. O sir, you don't know them! They are very complaisant, indulgent kind of people. Are not you, gentlemen?

1 Trades. Certainly, sir.

Omnes. Certainly.

Harry. Be kind enough to wait a few minutes without, my very good friends. [*Exeunt TRADESMEN.*]
Mr. Williams— [*Takes his Hand.*

Hosier. Sir—

[*Exit.*

Dorn. How dare you introduce this swarm of locusts here? How dare you?

Harry. [*With continued good Humour.*] Despair, sir, is a dauntless hero.

Dorn. Have you the effrontery to suppose, that I can or shall pay them?—What is it you mean?

Harry. To let you see I have creditors.

Dorn. Cheats! Bloodsuckers!

Harry. Some of them: but that is my fault—They must be paid.

Dorn. Paid!

Harry. The innocent must not suffer for the guilty.

Dorn. You will die in an alms-house!

Harry. May be so; but the orphan's and the widow's curse shall not meet me there!

Dorn. Harry! Zounds! [*Checking his Fondness.*] Paid! Whom do you mean to rob?

Harry. My name is Dornton, sir.

Dorn. Are you not—

[*Wanting Words.*]

Harry. Yes, sir.

Dorn. Quit the room! Begone!

Harry. You are the best of men, sir, and I—But I hate whining, Repentance is a pitiful scoundrel, that never brought back a single yesterday. Amendment is a fellow of more mettle—But it is too late—Suffer I ought, and suffer I must—My debts of honour discharged, do not let my tradesmen go unpaid.

Dorn. You have ruined me!

Harry. The whole is but five thousand pounds!

Dorn. But?—The counter is loaded with the destruction you have brought upon us all!

Harry. No, no—I have been a sad fellow, but not even my extravagance can shake this house.

Enter MR. SMITH, in Consternation.

Mr. Smith. Bills are pouring in so fast upon us, we shall never get through!

Harry. [*Struck: seized almost with Horror.*] What! —What is that you say?

Mr. Smith. We have paid our light gold so often over, that the people are very surly!

Dorn. Pay it no more!—Sell it instantly for what it is worth, disburse the last guinea, and shut up the doors!

Harry. [*Taking MR. SMITH aside.*] Are you serious?

Mr. Smith. Sir!

Harry. [*Impatiently.*] Are you serious, I say?—Is it not some trick to impose upon me?

Mr. Smith. Look into the shop, sir, and convince yourself!—If we have not a supply in half an hour, we must stop! [*Exit.*]

Harry. [*Wildly.*] Tol de rol—My father!—Sir! [*Turning away.*] Is it possible?—Disgraced?—Ruined?—In reality ruined!—By me?—Are these things so?—Tol de rol—

Dorn. Harry!—How you look!—You frighten me!

Harry. [*Starting.*] It shall be done!

Dorn. What do you mean?—Calm yourself, Harry!

Harry. Ay! By Heaven!

Dorn. Hear me, Harry!

Harry. This instant! [*Going.*]

Dorn. [*Calling.*] Harry!

Harry. Don't droop. [*Returning.*] Don't despair! I'll find relief——[*Aside.*] First to my friend—He cannot fail? But if he should!—Why ay, then to Megæra!—I will marry her, in such a cause! were she fifty widows and fifty furies!

Dorn. Calm yourself, Harry!

Harry. I am calm!—Very calm!—It shall be done! Don't be dejected—You are my father—You were the first of men in the first of cities—Revered by the good, and respected by the great—You flourished prosperously!—But you had a son!—I remember it!

Dorn. Why do you roll your eyes, Harry?

Harry. I won't be long away.

Dorn. Stay where you are, Harry! [*Catching his Hand.*] All will be well! I am very happy! Do not leave me!—I am very happy!—Indeed, I am, Harry!—Very happy!

Harry. Tol de rol—Heaven bless you, sir! You are a worthy gentleman!—I'll not be long!

Dorn. Hear me, Harry!—I am very happy!

Enter a CLERK.

Clerk. Mr. Smith, sir, desires to know, whether we may send to the Bank for a thousand pounds worth of silver.

Harry. [*Furiously.*] No, scoundrel!

[*Breaks away, and exit.*]

Dorn. [*Calling and almost sobbing.*] Harry!—Harry—I am very happy!—Harry Dornton!—[*In a Kind of Stupor.*] I am very happy!—Very happy!

[*Exit, following.*]

SCENE III.

The House of MR. SILKY.

Enter MR. SILKY and JACOB.

Silky. Mr. Goldfinch not called yet, Jacob?

Jacob. No, sir.

Silky. Nor any message from the widow?

Jacob. No, sir.

[*Knocking heard.*]

Silky. See who knocks, Jacob! [*Exit JACOB*] I dare say it is one or t'other! They must come to me at last!

Enter HARRY DORNTON, in wild Haste, following JACOB.

Harry. [*Entering.*] Are you sure he is at home?

Jacob. He is here, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Harry. Mr. Silky!—

[*Panting.*]

Silky. Ah! My dear Mr. Dornton, how do you do?—I hope you are very well! I am exceedingly glad to see you! This call is so kind, so condescending! It gives me infinite pleasure!

Harry. Mr. Silky, you must instantly grant me a favour.

Silky. A favour! What is it! How can I serve you? I would run to the world's end.

Harry. You must exert your whole friendship.

Silky. Friendship, sir? say duty! 'Twas you that made a man of me! I should have been ruined, in the Bench, I know not where or what, had you not come forward and supported me at the critical moment! And now I can defy the world!

Harry. [*Impatiently.*] Hear me! I know you can.

Silky. Oh yes! the sum you lent me, a lucky speculation, five years of continual good fortune, and other little lifts have made me—I won't say what—But, your father, and perhaps another or two excepted, I say perhaps, I'll show my head with the proudest of 'em.

Harry. Why, then I am a fortunate man!

Silky. To be sure you are! How can I serve you? What can I do? Make me happy!

Harry. You can rescue me from phrenzy!

Silky. Can I?—I am proud? Infinitely happy!—What? How? I am a lucky fellow! Tell me which way?—Where can I run? What can I do?

Harry. [*Dreading.*] The request is serious—trying!

Silky. So much the better! So much the better! Whom would I serve, if not you?—You! The son of the first man in the city!

Harry. [*Wildly.*] You mistake!

Silky. I don't? You are, you are! Dornton and Co. may challenge the world, the house of Hope perhaps excepted.

Harry. Woefully mistaken!

Silky. Pooh!

Harry. Our house is in danger of stopping payment!

Silky. Sir?—Stop payment!

Harry. My follies are the cause!

Silky. Stop payment!

Harry. I have not been used to ask favours—but—

Silky. Stop payment!

Harry. Scorn me, curse me, spurn me, but save my father!

Silky. Stop payment?

Harry. What means this alteration in your countenance?

Silky. Oh dear, no! Ha, ha, ha! Not in the least. Ha, ha, ha, I assure you, I, I, I—

Harry. I have told you our situation. Yourself and two other friends must jointly support my father by your credit, to the amount of fifty thousand pounds—Mark me!—Must!

Silky. Fifty thousand pounds, Mr. Dornton! Fifty thousand pounds! Are you dreaming? Me? Fifty thousand pounds! Me? Or half the sum? Or a fifth of the sum? Me!

Harry. Prevaricating scound—Hear me, sir!

Silky. [*In fear.*] Yes, sir!

Harry. I must be calm—[*Bursting out.*] Are you not a—I say—Sir—You have yourself informed me of your ability, and I must insist, observe, sir! I insist on your immediate performance of this act of duty!

Silky. Duty, and fifty thousand pounds! Are you mad, Mr. Dornton? Are you mad? Or do you think me mad?

Harry. I think you the basest of wretches!

Silky. Nay, Mr. Dornton, I would do any thing to serve you! Any thing, I protest to Heaven!—Would go any where, run—

Harry. Of my errands, wipe my shoes! Any dirty menial office that cost you nothing—And this you call showing your gratitude?

Silky. Is it not, Mr. Dornton?

Harry. [*His anger rising.*] And will you give no help to the house?

Silky. Nay, Mr. Dornton!—

Harry. After the favours you have been for years receiving, the professions you have been daily making, and the wealth you have by these means been hourly acquiring! Will you not, sir?

Silky. [*Retreating.*] Nay, Mr. Dornton!—

Harry. Will you not, sir?

Silky. Don't hurt a poor old man! I can't.

Harry. [*Seizing, Shaking him, and Throwing him from him.*] Scoundrel! [*Exit.*]

Silky. Bless my heart!—Stop payment?—The house of Dornton!—Fifty thousand pounds!—I declare I am all of a tremble! James! William!

Enter Two CLERKS.

Have we any bills on the house of Dornton?

1 *Clerk.* I have just been examining the books, sir. We have bills to the amount of—

Silky. How much? How much! a thousand pounds?

1 *Clerk.* Three, sir.

Silky. Three!—Three thousand?—Bless my heart!

1 *Clerk.* We heard the news the very moment after young Mr. Dornton came in!

Silky. Run, pay the bills away!

1 *Clerk.* Where, sir?

Silky. Any where! Any body will take 'em! Run with them to my dear friend, Mr. Smallware; it is too far for him to have heard of the crash. Begone! Don't leave him! Give my very best respects to him!

—He will oblige me infinitely! Fly! [*Exit First CLERK.*] And go you, James, to the clearing house, and get it whispered among the clerks. Then, if there are any of Dornton's bills to be bought at fifty per cent. discount, let me know. I will buy up all I can — [*Exit CLERK.*] It's a safe speculation: I know the house: there must be a good round dividend. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The House of the WIDOW WARREN.

Enter JENNY, followed by HARRY DORNTON, who, with an oppressed Heart, but half Drunk with Wine and Passion, assumes the Appearance of wild and excessive Gaiety.

Harry. Away, handmaid of Hecate! Fly!

Jenny. Lord, sir, you don't mean as you say!

Harry. Will you begone, Cerbera?—Invite my goddess to decend in a golden shower, and suddenly relieve these racking doubts!

Enter WIDOW—and exit JENNY, dissatisfied.

Widow. [*Smiling.*] Mr. Dornton!

Harry. Widow!—Here am I!—Phaeton the Second, hurled from my flaming car!—I come burning with fierce desires, devoutly bent on committing the deadly sin of matrimony! May these things be! Speak, my saving angel!

Widow. Nay, but—! Dear Mr. Dornton—!

Harry. Do not imagine, amiable Widow, that I am mad!—No, no, no!—*[With a hysteric Laugh.]* Only a little flighty—Left my father furiously, drank three bottles of Burgundy frantically, flew in amorous phrensy to the attack, and will carry the place, or die on the spot!—Powder and poison await my choice; and let me tell you, sweet Widow, I am a man of my word. So you'll have me, won't you?

Widow. Oh, Mr. Dornton—!

Harry. Why you would not see my father perish! Would you? And me expire! Would you?

Widow. Am I so very cruel?

Harry. Then say, Yes!—Yes, or—Pistols—Daggers—Cannon balls!

Widow. Yes, sir, yes, yes!

Harry. Hold, fair Widow! Kind Widow, hold! Be not rash!—I am the veriest villain!—Avoid me!—A ruined—But that were indeed a trifle—My father! Him! Him have I ruined! Heard you that? Bring forth your hoards! Let him once more be himself, and bid me kiss the dust!

Widow. Oh fie!—How can you terrify one so?

Harry. And wilt thou, Widow, be his support?—*[Eagerly.]* Wilt thou?

Widow. Cruel question! How can I deny?

Harry. Immortal blessings be upon thee! My father!

Widow. Will be all rapture to hear—!

Harry. *[Shakes his Head.]* Ah, ha, ha, ha! *[Sighs.]* You don't know my father! A strange, affectionate—! That loves me!—Oh! He—! And you see how I use him! You see how I use him!—But no matter—Tol de rol—We'll be married to-night.

Widow. Oh, fie!

Harry. Aye, my Madona! To-night's the day—The sooner the better—'Tis to rescue a father, blithsome Widow! A father! To save him have I fallen

in love—Remember——Sin with open eyes, Widow——Money—I must have money—Early in the morn, ere counters echo with the ring of gold, fifty thousand must be raised.

Widow. It shall, Mr. Dornton.

Harry. Why, shall it? Shall it? Speak again, beatific vision, speak! Shall it?

Widow. Dear Mr. Dornton, it shall.

Harry. Tol de rol—Remember!—Fifty thousand the first thing in the morning?

Widow. And would not a part this evening?

[*Still coquetting.*]

Harry. [*Suddenly.*] What sayest thou?—Oh, no! Whoo!—Thousands—

Widow. I have a trifling sum.

Harry. [*Eagerly.*] How much?

Widow. Six thousand—

Harry. Six?

Widow. Which I meant to have disposed of, but—

Harry. No, no! I'll dispose of it, dear Widow!—
[*Kisses her.*] I'll dispose of it in a twinkling! [*Elated.*]
—Doubt not my gratitude——Let this, and this—

[*Kissing.*]

Widow. Fie! You are a sad man—But I'll bring you a draft!

Harry. Do, my blooming Widow! Empress of the golden isles, do!

Widow. I tell you, you are a very bad man!—But, remember, this trifle is for your own use.

Harry. No, my pearl unparalleled! My father's! Save but my father, and I will kiss the ground on which thou treadest, and live and breathe but on thy bounty!

[*Self Indignation.*]

[*Exit WIDOW.*]

At least till time and fate shall means afford.

Somewhat to perform, worthy of man and me.

Enter JENNY, peeping.

Jenny. St!

Harry. Ah, ha! My merry maid of May!

Jenny. I suppose you are waiting to see Miss Sophy, now you have got rid of the old lady?

Harry. Got rid of the old lady!—The old lady is to be my blooming, youthful bride!—And I, happy youth, am written and destined in the records of eternity her other half!—Heigho!

Jenny. Lord, sir, what rapturation!—But stay a little, and I'll tell Miss Sophy her mamma wants her here; so then—Hush!—

[JENNY retires, making a Sign.

Enter the WIDOW WARREN.

Widow. Here's the draft.

Harry. Thanks, my Sultana!—This halcyon night the priest, pronouncing conjurations dire——

Widow. Fie! I won't look at you!

Harry. Aye, to night we'll marry; shall we not?

Widow. I'll not answer you a word!

Enter SOPHIA skippingly, but stops short.

How dare you talk to me of to-night?

[Sitting down, and coquetting.

Harry. To-night shall be a night of wonder! And we'll love like—*[Aside.]* like Darby and Joan!

Widow. *[Languishingly.]* I shall hate you intolerably!

[SOPHIA advancing on Tiptoe.

Harry. Hey for the parson's permission Eh, my sublime widow!

Widow. To steal thus upon one at an unguarded moment!—

Harry. But here first let me kneel, and thus to Ceres pay—

[Going to kiss her Hand in Rapture, meets the Eye of Sophia.

Soph. *[Coming between them with bursting Trepida-*

tion, taking the Valentine from her Bosom, and presenting it.] There, sir!

Widow. Ah!

Soph. There, sir!—Oh, pray, sir, take it, sir!

Widow. Why, minikin!—

Soph. I request it, sir!—I desire, sir!

Harry. [*Declining.*] Tol de rol——

Soph. [*Tearing the Paper piecemeal, and throwing it spitefully away.*] Why, then, there, sir—and there, sir—and there, there, there, there, sir!

Widow. Poor minikin! I declare, she is jealous!

Soph. [*Her Sobs rising.*] And I'll—I'll—wri-i-ite to my—to my grandma-a-a-a directly——

Widow. Fie, child!

Soph. And I'll go do--o-own—— into Glo-o-o-ostershire——

Widow. Go up to your chamber, child!

Soph. And I'll tell my grandma-a what a false, base, bad man you are; and she shall ha-ate you, and despise you; and I'll ha-a-ate you, and despise you myself!

Widow. Poor thing!

Soph. And, moreover, I'll hate and despise all mankind! And for your sake [*With great Energy.*] I'll live and die a maid!

Widow. Yes, child, that I dare be sworn you will!

Harry. Widow! I'm a sad fellow! Don't have me—I'm a vile fellow! Sophy! you are right to despise me! I am going to marry your mother!

Soph. I'll go down into Glo-o-ostershire—I wo-on't live in such a false-hearted city! And you ought to be asham'd of yourself, ma', to make yourself so ridiculous!

Harry. No, no, sweet Sylph, it is my fault! all my fault!

Widow. [*Enraged.*] Begone, miss!

Harry. [*Interposing.*] Sweet widow, gentle widow!

—I've sold myself, Sophy! Six thousand pounds is the earnest money paid down, for the reptile Harry Dornton!—I love you, Sophy!

Widow. How, Mr. Dornton?

Harry. I do, by Heaven! Take back your money, Widow! [*Offering the Draft.*] I'm a sad scoundrel!

Soph. You are a base faithless man, you know you are! And you are a pitiless woman, a merciless woman, for all you are my own mother, to let my poor brother Milford go to be starved to death in a dark dungeon!

Harry. Milford in prison!

Soph. Yes, sir; arrested by your cruel, old, ugly father! I'm sure he is ugly! Though I never saw him in my life, I'm sure he is an ugly, hideous, ugly monster. [*Exit.*

Harry. Is this true, Widow?

Widow. [*Stammering.*] Sir—

Harry. [*Agitated.*] Arrested by my father?—Squandering her money on a ruined reprobate, and won't release her husband's son?

Widow. Nay, but, dear Mr. Dornton!

Harry. I'll be with you again presently, Widow; presently, presently. [*Exit.*

Enter JENNY.

Jenny. Mr. Goldfinch is coming up, ma'am.

Widow. I have no time to waste with Mr. Goldfinch. I'll presently send him about his business. Mr. Dornton talks, I don't know how, Jenny—Says it must be to-night.

Enter GOLDFINCH.

Gold. Well, Widow.

Widow. Not so free, sir?

[*Walks up the Stage disdainfully.*

Jenny. [*Aside to GOLDFINCH.*] Have you got the license?

Gold. No.

Jenny. No!

Gold. No—been to Tattersall's.

Jenny. And not for the licence?

Gold. Tellee I've been to Tattersall's!

Jenny. Ah! It's all over!

Gold. Made sure of the Eclipse colts!——Must not lose 'em!

Jenny. [*Aside.*] Stupid booby!

Widow. [*Advancing.*] What is your present business, sir?

Gold. My business? Ha, ha, ha! That's a good one! I'll tell you my business——

[*Approaching with open Arms.*

Widow. [*Haughtily.*] Keep your distance, sir?

Gold. Distance, Widow? No; that's not the way. I should be double distanced if I did.

Widow. Were you indeed a man of deportment and breeding—!

Gold. Breeding?—Look at my spurs!

Widow. Had you the manner, the spirit, the——
But no—you are no gentleman—

Gold. Whew! No gentleman? [*Claps on his Hat, and takes a lounging impudent Swagger.*] Dammee, that's a good one!—Charles Goldfinch no gentleman?—Ask in the box-lobby! Inquire at the School!

[*In a boxing Attitude.*

Widow. Sir, you are a tedious person: your company is troublesome!

Gold. Turf or turnpike, keep the best of cattle—Walk, trot, or gallop——Run, amble, or canter——Laugh at every thing on the road——Give 'em all the go by—Beat the trotting butcher!—Gentleman?——That's your sort!

Jenny. [*Aside to GOLDFINCH.*] Follow me. [*Exit.*

Widow. I beg, sir, I may not be intruded upon, by you or your horse-jockey jargon any more. [*Exit.*

Gold. Here's a kick up!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

*An Apartment at the House of a SHERIFF'S
OFFICER.*

*Enter HARRY DORNTON, in the same Hurry, and
OFFICER.*

Harry. Despatch, man! Despatch! Tell Jack Milford I can't wait a moment!—Hold—Write an acquittal instantly for the thousand pounds. But say not a word to him of my intention!

Officer. A thousand, sir? It is almost five thousand!

Harry. Impossible!

Officer. There are detainers already lodged to that amount.

Harry. Five thousand!

Officer. Must I write the acquittal for the sum total?

Harry. No—Yes, write it, however. Have it ready. Early to-morrow morning it shall all be paid.

Officer. In the mean time there may be more detainers.

Harry. Damnation! What shall I do?—Run, send him!—And, do you hear? a bottle of Champagne and two rummers!—Rummers! Mind!—Not a word to him!—[*Exit OFFICER.*—Five thousand!—And more detainers!

Enter WAITER with Bottle and Glasses, and MILFORD following.

Milf. Mr. Dornton!

Harry. How now, Jack! What's your wonder? I can't stay a moment with you, but I could not pass

without giving you a call. Your hand, my boy!—
Cheer up!

Milf. Excuse me, sir!

Harry. Why, Jack!—Where is the wine!—[*Fills the Rummers.*] Come, drink, and wash away grief! 'Sblood, never look frosty and askaunce, man, but drink, drink, drink!

Milf. [*Abruptly.*] Sir, I am not disposed to drink!

Harry. Here's confusion to all sorrow and thinking!—I could a tale unfold—! But I won't afflict you—Hurrah, Jack! Keep up your spirits! Be determined, like me!—I am the vilest of animals that crawl the earth—Yet I won't flag!—I'll die a bold-faced villain!—I have sold myself—Am disinherited—Have lost—Ah, Sophia!—Hurrah, Jack! Keep it up!—Round let the great globe whirl; and whirl it will, though I should happen to slide from its surface into infinite nothingness—Drink, my noble soul!

Milf. Your mirth is impertinent, sir!

Harry. So it is, Jack—Damn'd impertinent! But ruin is around us, and it is high time to be merry!

Milf. Sir? I must inform you, that, though I have been betrayed by you, and imprisoned by your father, I will not be insulted!

Harry. Betrayed by me?

Milf. Aye, sir! I have had full information of your mean arts! It was necessary I should be out of the way, that your designs on Mrs. Warren might meet no interruption!

Harry. Pshaw!—Good day, Jack, good day!

Milf. And pray, sir, inform your father, I despise his meanness, and spurn at his malice!

Harry. [*Suddenly returning and darting on him, but stopping short.*] Jack Milford!—Utter no blasphemy against my father!—I am half mad!—I came your friend—

Milf. I despise your friendship!

Harry. That as you please—Think all that is vile of me—I defy you to exceed the truth—But utter not a word against my father!

Milf. Deliberately, pitifully malignant!—Not satisfied with the little vengeance he himself could take, he has sent round to all my creditors!

Harry. 'Tis false!

Milf. False?

Harry. A vile, eternal falsehood!

Enter OFFICER, with Papers and Writs.

Officer. Gentlemen!—Did you call?

Harry. [Interrupting him.] Leave the room, sir!

Officer. But——!

Harry. We are busy, sir!

Officer. I thought——

Harry. I tell you we are busy, and must not be interrupted! [*Exit OFFICER.*]—[*Pause of Consideration.*] Mr. Milford, you shall hear from me immediately. [*Exit HARRY.*]

Milf. [After ruminating.] What were those papers? Surely I have not been rash?—Nobody but his father could have brought my creditors thus on me all at once?—He seemed half drunk, or half frantic!—Said he was ruined, disinherited—Talked something of to-morrow—what could the purport of his coming be?

Enter OFFICER.

Well, sir?

Officer. Here is a note, sir.

Milf. From whom?

Officer. The young gentleman.

Milf. [Reads aside.] I understand you are at liberty—How! At liberty? [*The OFFICER bows.*]—[Reads.] I shall walk up to Hyde Park: you will find me at the Ring at six—exactly at six.—At liberty?

Officer. Your debts are all discharged.

Milf. Impossible!—Which way?—By whom?

Officer. Why, sir—That is—

Milf. No hesitation, but tell me by whom?

Officer. Sir—I thought I perceived some anger between you and the young gentleman?

Milf. Ask no questions, sir; make no delays! Tell me who has paid my debts?—Tell me the truth—Consequences you do not suspect depend upon your answer!

Officer. I perceive, sir, there has been some warmth between you: and though the young gentleman made me promise silence and secrecy—

Milf. [*Astonishment.*] What, then it was Mr. Dorn-ton? [*OFFICER bows.*] Madman! What have I done!
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The House of DORNTON.

Enter HARRY DORNTON, followed by MR. SMITH.

Harry. And the danger not yet past?

Mr. Smith. Far from it: Mr. Sulky has twice brought us supplies, and is gone a third time.

Harry. Brave spirit! He would coin his heart!—My father supports it nobly?

Mr. Smith. He is anxious only for you.

Harry. Well, well! Ha, ha, ha! Tol lol—I'll bring him relief—Comfort him, assure him of it!—Ay, hear me, Heaven, and—! To-night is too late, but to-morrow all shall be well!—Excellent well!

Mr. Smith. [*Significantly.*] You will marry the Widow?

Harry. Have you heard?—Ay, boy, ay!—We'll marry!—Early in the morning, that all may be safe.—Why, ay—[*Looking at his Watch.*] The proctor's, the lawyer's, the Widow's, and [*Starts.*] at six?—

[*Aside.*] The Ring?—The Ring at six?—Fiends!—Who can say what may happen?—What, leave my father to perish?—I'll not go! Though all hell should brand me for a coward, I'll not go!—Mr. Smith, take care of my father!—Mark me, I recommend my father to you! [Exit.]

Enter MR. DORNTON.

Dorn. Where is Harry?—Did not I hear his voice?

Mr. Smith. He is this moment gone, sir.

Dorn. Gone where?

Mr. Smith. Do you not suspect where, sir?

Dorn. [*Alarmed.*] Suspect!—What?—Speak

Mr. Smith. To the Widow Warren's.

Dorn. For what purpose?

Mr. Smith. To marry her.

Dorn. Marry!—The Widow Warren!

Mr. Smith. And save the house by her fortune.

Dorn. Generous Harry! Noble, affectionate boy! I'd perish first!

Mr. Smith. He seems very resolute—He has already had six thousand pounds of her.

Dorn. Marry her? I shall go mad!—Where is Mr. Sulky?

Mr. Smith. He is just returned. I hear him in the compting-house.

Dorn. Tell him I wish to speak with him. [*Exit MR. SMITH.*] Harry Dornton and the Widow Warren?—I shall die in Bedlam!

Enter MR. SULKY.

Are we safe, Mr. Sulky?

Sulky. For to-day, perhaps.

Dorn. What bank have we to begin to-morrow?

Sulky. I can't tell—I fear not thirty thousand.

Dorn. Mr. Sulky, you—you—have this day shown yourself an active partner, and a sincere friend.

Sulky. Humph.

Dorn. I have long esteemed you; I esteem you more and more.

Sulky. Humph.

Dorn. My son Harry—[*Hesitating.*] You're a very good man, Mr. Sulky; a compassionate man, though you don't look so.

Sulky. Humph.

Dorn. 'Tis pity to see so noble a youth—I am sure you would not wish him any harm, Mr. Sulky; I am sure you would not!

Sulky. Whom?

Dorn. Harry Dornton. Would you?—Would you?—Would you, Mr. Sulky?

Sulky. A kind question.

Dorn. Nay, I did not mean to be unkind, Mr. Sulky! you know I did not—Shall we not venture one step more to save him?

Sulky. Save? Impossible! Ruin only can reform him; total ruin.

Dorn. You mistake, Mr. Sulky. His own misfortunes little affected him, but mine—! He is struck to the heart!—I know him?

Sulky. So do I.

Dorn. Struck to the heart!—I'm sure on't! He'll be a good man!—A great man!

Sulky. Humph.

Dorn. You know the Widow Warren, Mr. Sulky?

Sulky. Don't you?

Dorn. I never saw her in my life—I hear she is full forty, her manners absurd, her character cruel, and her morals———

Sulky. Bad enough.

Dorn. Six thousand pounds at this moment is a great sum. I own it! But do you think I ought not to venture?

Sulky. Venture what?

Dorn. To—To take it from our bank?

Sulky. For what?

Dorn. For—For the—the relief of Harry Dorn-ton?

Sulky. What you please! Take all! What is it to me?

Dorn. Nay, but, Mr. Sulky, you surely don't see the thing in the right light?

Sulky. I can starve like the rest!

Dorn. [*Snappish Haste.*] Very well, Mr. Sulky! Very well! I perceive you can be interested, and—and—

Sulky. And what?

Dorn. Very well, Mr. Sulky! Very well!

Sulky. I can stare bankruptcy in the face as steadfastly as you can.

Dorn. Ay, ay! no doubt! The world is all alike! I am an old fool, and so shall live and die!

Sulky. Why do you ask my advice? Take the money! Empty the coffers! Pour it all into his hat! Give him guineas to play at chuck-farthing, and bank-bills to curl his hair!

Dorn. Very well, Mr. Sulky!—Friendship, generosity, a sense of justice? Oh! It's all a farce!

Sulky. Humph!

Dorn. [*Rings.*] Very well, sir! Very well!

Enter SERVANT.

Is the carriage ready?

Serv. It's at the door, sir.

[*Exit.*

Dorn. [*Going, turns back.*] So, Mr. Sulky, you could see him married to this widow, to whom you have so often, as well as now, given the worst of characters, rather than incur a little more risk for your friend?

Sulky. Marry?

Dorn. Yes, marry!

Sulky. Whom?

Dorn. The Widow Warren, I tell you!

Sulky. And Harry Dornton?

Dorn. Yes, and Harry Dornton!

Sulky. When, where?

Dorn. Immediately! With unexampled affection, to save me, who am old and worthless, he would devote his youth, his great qualities, and his noble heart, to all the torments which such a marriage and such a woman can inflict!

Sulky. Take the money!

Dorn. Are you serious, Mr. Sulky!

Sulky. Take the money! Away! Begone! I would indeed starve, inchmeal, rather than he should marry her!

Dorn. Mr. Sulky, you are a worthy man, a true friend!

Sulky. Curse compliments! Make haste!

[*Exeunt*]

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The WIDOW WARREN'S.

SOPHIA and JENNY meeting.

Jenny. So, miss! Here's your mamma just coming down.

Soph. [*Much agitated.*] Is she dressed?

Jenny. Oh, yes!—I have decorationed her out like any king's coach-horse.

Soph. It's very well.

Jenny. With her ribbands and ringlets stuck about and dangleating down her back, and all here—

Soph. It's very well.

Jenny. Tight laced——

Soph. It's very well —But it will be no wedding—

Jenny. [*Aside.*] I hope not.

Soph. He told her to her face, that he loved me, and offered to give her the money back—He'll never have her—And if he does, I don't care—I know I shall die broken-hearted, but I don't care—I'll tell all to my dear grandma', for I'll not stay in this wicked city—No! He sha'n't see me pine away—I know my ghost will haunt him: but I can't help it. I never wished him any harm, and had he been but true-hearted, and have waited for me, I would—But it is no matter—He sha'n't see a tear that I shed, nor hear the least sigh that I heave.

Enter the WIDOW WARREN.

Jenny. [*Looking, admiring, and walking round her.*] Well, ma'am—I declare you're a pictur!

Widow. Do you think I look tolerably, Jenny? [*Walking and surveying herself.*—Shall I do execution? What is the matter, child?

Soph. Mark my words, he'll never have you!

Widow. Poor thing!

Soph. He never will!

[*Knocking heard at the Street Door.*

Widow. Run, Jenny, see who it is! [*Exit JENNY.*] Go up to your chamber, child.

Soph. No! I will stay here.

Widow. Begone to your chamber, I say, miss!

Soph. Beat me, if you please; kill me, but I will not!

Enter JENNY.

Jenny. Here's an elderly gentleman, ma'am, asks to speak to you.

Widow. Will you begone, miss?

Soph. Since it is not he, I don't want to stay. I only want to look him in the face once more. [*Exit.*

Widow. How is he dressed?

Jenny. In grey, ma'am.

Widow. In grey! [Considering.]

Jenny. Yes, ma'am.

Widow. In dark grey? [Hoping.]

Jenny. Yes, ma'am.

Widow. [Earnestly.] Does he look like a parson, Jenny?

Jenny. Why, ma'am, he is a soberly, smug, jobation-looking man enough.

Widow. Let him be shown in—I dare say it is the Divine!

Enter MR. DORNTON.

Dorn. Your humble servant, madam.

Widow. Sir, your very most humble servant.

[With great Respect.]

Dorn. I presume you are unacquainted with me.

Widow. [Simpering.] I believe I can penetrate, sir—

Dorn. Can you, madam?

Widow. [With her Fan before her Face.] You—you come on the—part of—young Mr. Dornton?

Dorn. [Surprised.] I do!

Widow. [Aside.] It is the parson!—Would you be so indulgent as to be seated, sir?

Dorn. Excuse me, madam.

Widow. Would you be pleased to take any refreshment, sir?

Dorn. Madam!—None, I thank you.

Widow. A morsel of seed-cake, a French biscuit, a bit of orange loaf, a glass of Constantia, or a jelly?—I know these little cordial comforts are agreeable consolations to gentlemen of your cloth.

Dorn. [Surveying himself.] Cloth!

Widow. No offence, I hope? I participate in them myself.

Dorn. Hem! No doubt!

Widow. You are acquainted with Mr. Dornton?

Dorn. Why—Yes—I am, I believe, one of his oldest acquaintance.

Widow. Then I dare say you have a great regard for him?

Dorn. Hem!—Yes—I—had a—sort of a friendship for him even before he was born.

Widow. Sir!—Oh!—You are intimate with the family?

Dorn. Yes—yes, madam!

Widow. And know his father?

Dorn. Um—[*Shrugs.*] Why—Though I have kept him company from the day of his birth to this very hour, they tell me I don't know him yet!

Widow. Ay, indeed! Is he so odd?

Dorn. Sometimes—To my great regret, I have sometimes found him a very absurd old gentleman!

Widow. I am sorry for it!—Because as I am soon to become—hymeneally—his intimate—relation—I—I—
[*Maidenly Affectation.*]

Dorn. You would wish for a sensible, indulgent—Papa—
[*Smiles.*]

Widow. It's natural, sir.
[*Simpering.*]

Dorn. Ha! I dare not say too much in his favour.

Widow. Nay, though I have a vast—hum—ha—regard for young Mr. Dornton—I own I have no great predilection of opinion for the father!

[*Nodding very significantly.*]

Dorn. [*Suddenly.*] Nor he for you, madam!

Widow. Do you think so!

Dorn. I am sure so!

Widow. I warrant, sir, he is, as you say, a very precise, acrimonious person!—A tetchy repugnant kind of old gentleman!

Dorn. I said no such thing, madam!

Widow. Ah!—A little caution, sir, to be sure, becomes gentlemen of your cloth.

Dorn. Cloth again!—I don't know what you mean by my cloth; but Mr. Dornton, madam, is little older

than yourself: nor does he think himself half so repugnant.

Widow. Sir!

Dorn. [*Recollecting himself.*] Madam!—I—I beg your pardon!—I— [*Bowing.*

Widow. [*Knocking heard.*] Oh! Here, I dare say, comes the bridegroom!

[*Enraptured: crosses to the Door.*

Dorn. [*Aside.*] My curs'd vivacity! I can never tell her after this who I am. [*Walks up the Stage.*

Enter HARRY DORNTON, in Haste.

Widow. O, you rover!

Harry. Well, my kind Widow! [*MR. DORNTON turns quick round at hearing his Son's Voice, and gradually approaches.*] My loving compassionate Widow! I am come post haste to cast myself once more on your bounty!

Widow. Hush!

Harry. To intreat instant commiseration, and aid!

Widow. Hem! Hem! [*Aloud.*

Harry. I have not a minute to spare!

Widow. [*Whisper.*] He's here! He's come! A waspish, tetchy—! Hem!—[*Aloud.*] Your friend has been here some time Mr. Dornton!

Harry. My friend? What friend?

Widow. Your friend the clergyman.

[*Pointing to MR. DORNTON.*

Harry. Clergyman!—You—[*Turning, sees his father at his Elbow.*]—My father!

Widow. His father!

[*Pause.*

Dorn. Well, Harry, why do you look so blank? I am glad you are here—Your coming, and the mutual sincerity with which this lady and I have just spoken our sentiments, will save all circumlocution—At present we understand each other.

Widow. Sir—I—

Dorn. O, madam, never retract—Let us continue the like plain honest dealing——

Widow. But—Sir—Mr. Dornton's affection—

Dorn. Ha, ha, ha!—Affection, madam!—

[Pitying her Delusion.]

Harry. Sir—

Dorn. Harry!—I know your motives! Will never forget them! But the cause of them has ceased.

Harry. Sir!—Beware! No false compassion! Remember not the vile reprobate that was your son! I spurn at existence that is coupled with your misery!

Dorn. Harry! Our danger is over.

Harry. Are you—Are you serious?

Dorn. Mr. Sulky is a worthy man! His rich uncle is dead, and has left him sole heir. Our books too have been examined, and exceed our best hopes.

Harry. Tol de rol—!

Dorn. Here is your money, madam.

Harry. My father saved?—Tol de rol!—

Widow. Nay but—Mr. Dornton!—Sir—

[Ready to cry.]

Dorn. I must beg you will take it—

Harry. Rejoice, Widow! Rejoice! Sing, shout! Tol de rol!

Widow. I do not want the money, sir! Filthy money—*[Whimpering restrained.]* And as to what I said, though you have arrested Mr. Milford—

Harry. Ha!

[Starts, considers, and looks at his Watch.]

Widow. I am sorry—I beg your pardon—And if Mr. Dornton—

Dorn. Why don't you speak, Harry? Where are you going?

[HARRY DORNTON crosses hastily to the Door.]
Come back, Harry!—Stay, I say!

Harry. I cannot stay!—I must fly!—My honour is at stake? *[Exit.]*

Dorn. *[Alarmed.]* His honour!—His honour at stake!—Here, here, madam!—

[Offering her Bank-bills.]

Widow. Nay, sir—

Dorn. 'Sdeath, madam, take your money. [*Exit.*

Widow. [*Sobbing.*] Cruel—usage!—Faithless—men—Blind—Stupid!—I'll forsake and forswear the whole sex!

Enter JENNY with glee, on Tip-toe, as if she had been on the Watch.

Jenny. Ma'am.

Widow. [*Sobbing.*] Savage race!

Jenny. Ma'am Ma'am! Mr. Goldfinch, ma'am!

Widow. Eh! Mr. Goldfinch?—Was that what you said, Jenny? [*Brightens up.*] Where?

Jenny. Below ma'am. I persuaded him to come up, but he is quite surly.

Widow. Oh! He is coming? Well! I think I will see him—Yes—I think I will.

Jenny. I always told you, ma'am, Mr. Goldfinch for me.

Widow. Did you?

Jenny. But he says he will have your written promise this very night, or never speak to you more—I hear him. [*Adjusting the WIDOW'S Dress.*] Law, ma'am, you had better give a few touches—Hereabout! Your eyes will have double the spirit and fire.

Widow. Will they? [*Exit.*

Enter GOLDFINCH.

Gold. Where's the Dowager?

Jenny. Hush! Mind what I said to you—It is too late now for a licence, so be sure get the promise—Don't flinch!

Gold. Me flinch? Game to the back-bone!

Jenny. Hush!

Re-enter the WIDOW WARREN.

Gold. Here I am once more, Widow.

Widow. Ah, rambler!

Gold. Are you cured of the tantarums?

Widow. Nay, Mr. Goldfinch!—

Gold. Must I keep my distance?

Widow. Unkind!

Gold. Am I a gentleman now?

Widow. Killing!

Gold. Look you, Widow, I know your tricks—
Skittish! Won't answer the whip! Run out of the
course! Take the rest!—So give me your promise.

Widow. My promise!—

Gold. Signed and sealed.

Widow. Naughty man—You shan't—I won't let
you tyrannize over a palpitating heart!

Gold. Palpi—[*To JENNY.*] What does she say?

Widow. You shan't steal on hymeneal transports.

Gold. What's that?

Widow. Connubial ecstacies!

Gold. Nu—What?

Widow. Go, intruder!

Gold. Oh! what, you won't?

Widow. I'll never forgive you.

Gold. I'm off.

Widow. Cruel man!

Gold. I'm off.

Widow. Mr. Goldfinch!

[*Calling.*

Gold. I'm off.

Widow. You shall have the promise!

Gold. Oh, ho! Why then, I pull up—

Widow. Barbarous youth! Could you leave me?—
But I must send to Mr. Silky.

Gold. No, no! Let me have the promise directly!
I'll go myself to Silky.

Widow. Will you, Mr. Goldfinch?

Gold. Will I not?—Take a hack, mount the box—
Hayait;—Scud away for the old scoundrel! I'm a
deep one! Know the course every inch! I'm the lad
for a widow! That's your sort!

Widow. Saucy man! I'll be very angry with you.

Gold. Soon be back.

Widow. Adieu! Fly swiftly, ye minutes!

Gold. But I must have the promise first!

Widow. I will go and write it—Come, dissembler, come!
[*Exit, languishing.*]

Gold. She's an old courser! But I knew I should take her at the double!

Enter MILFORD.

Milf. So, Charles, where's the Widow?

Gold. The Widow's mine!

Milf. Yours?

Gold. I'm the lad! All's concluded—Going post for old Silky.

[*Offers to go, at every Speech, but is eagerly stopped by MILFORD.*]

Milf. Silky, did you say?

Gold. Am to pay the miserly rascal fifty thousand pounds down! But, mum! That's a secret!

Milf. You are raving!

Gold. Tellee he has her on the hip! She can't marry without his consent!

Milf. But why?

Gold. Don't know. The close old rogue won't tell. Has got some deed, he says—Some writing.

Milf. Indeed!

Gold. Yes—But it's a secret! I shall be a higher fellow than ever, Jack! Go to the second spring meeting—Take you with me—Come down a few to the Sweaters and Trainers—The knowing ones—The Lads—Get into the secret—lay it on thick—Seven hundred to five Favourite against the field!—Done!—I'll do it again!—Done!—Five times over ditto repeated!—Done, done!—Off they go;—Winner lays by—Pretends to want foot—Odds rise high! Take 'em—Winner whispered lame—Lags after—Odds higher and

higher!—Take 'em—Creeps up—Breathes 'em over the flat—Works 'em up hill—Passes the distance post—Still only second—Betting chair in an uproar—Neck to neck—Lets him out—Shows him the whip—Shoots by like an arrow—O, damme, a hollow thing—That's your sort! *[Exit.*

Milf. Fifty thousand to Silky, for his consent, because of some instrument, some writing!—If it should be the—? It must—By Heaven, it must!

[Exit, hastily.

SCENE II.

The Ring in Hyde Park.

HARRY DORNTON, *looking at his Watch.*

Harry. How long must I wait!—I see nothing of Milford—I'll cut off that bailiff's ears if he has betrayed me. *[Walks about.*

Enter MR. DORNTON, out of Breath.

Dorn. So, Harry!

Harry. My father again?

Dorn. *[Panting.]* What do you do here, Harry?

Harry. Sir—I—I want air.

Dorn. So do I—A pretty dance you have led me—What brought you hither?—*[Sudden Recollection.]* Where's the money you had of the Widow? *[Pause: seeming to dread an Answer.]* Where is the money, Harry?

Harry. *[Reluctantly.]* Gone, sir.

Dorn. Gone!

Harry. Most of it.

Dorn. And your creditors not paid? *[Another Pause.]* And your creditors not paid?

Harry. No, sir.

Dorn. *[Raises his Hands.]* I suspected—I foreboded this!—*[HARRY DORNTON walks up the*

Stage.] He has been at some gaming-house, lost all, quarrelled, and come here to put a miserable end to a miserable existence! Oh, who would be a father!

[*Extreme Anguish.*]

Enter WAITER.

Wait. I am sent on an April-day kind of errand here. I think this is what they call the Ring. [*Looks round.*] Hey! Who is this? [*Surveying MR. DORNTON.*] Pray—Sir—Is your name Dornton?

Dorn. It is.

Wait. Then I am right——Mr. Milford, sir, has sent me with this note. [*Exit.*]

Harry. [*Advancing.*] It is for me, sir!

Dorn. How do you know, Harry?

Harry. Sir, I am certain!—I must beg—

Dorn. This is no time for ceremony! [*Reads.*]
Dear Harry, forgive the provocation I have given you: forget the wrong I have done your father——Me!——I will submit to any disgrace, rather than lift my hand against your life—I would have come and apologised even on my knees, but am prevented—J. Milford.—
[*Pause.*]—Why, Harry!—What?—What is this?—Tell me—Tell me——Is it in paying Milford's debts you have expended the money?

Harry. It is, sir.

Dorn. [*After raising his clasped Hands in Rapture, as if to return Thanks, suddenly suppresses his Feelings.*] But how had he wronged me!——Why, did you come here to fight him?

Harry. Sir—He—he spoke disrespectfully of you. [*Pause.*]

Dorn. [*With his Eyes fixed on his Son, till, unable any longer to contain himself, he covers them with one Hand, and stretches out the other.*] Harry!

Harry. [*Taking his Father's Hand, but turning his Back likewise, to conceal his Agitation.*] My father!
[*Pause.*]

Dorn. Harry!—Harry!

[*Struggling affection—Pause.*]

Harry. Dear sir, let us fly to console poor Milford!

Dorn. What you will, Harry! do with me what you will—Oh, who would not be a father! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The House of the WIDOW WARREN.

Enter MILFORD and MR. SULKY.

Milf. The fool Goldfinch himself informed me, sir, that Silky is to receive fifty thousand pounds for his consent!

Sulky. Fifty thousand! Zounds! Why then the old scoundrel must have got possession of the will!

Milf. Which is indubitably meant to be destroyed. Goldfinch is just returned with Silky. They are now with the Widow, all in high glee, and are coming up here immediately, no doubt to settle the business in private.

Sulky. What can be done?

Milf. We must hide ourselves somewhere, and spring upon them.

Sulky. I hate hiding. It is deceit, and deceit is the resource of a rascal.

Milf. But there is no avoiding it! We cannot get legal assistance in time! Here are two closets! Do you go into one, and I'll shut myself up in the other. We shall hear what they are about, and can burst upon them at the proper moment.

Sulky. Well, if it must be so—But it's a vile, paltry refuge!

Milf. I hear them coming! Make haste!

[*Exeunt SULKY and MILFORD, into the Closets.*]

Enter SILKY, WIDOW, and GOLDFINCH.

Silky. Ha, ha, ha! I told you, madam, I should hear from you, when you wanted me! I knew it must come to that! But you are a lucky man, Mr. Goldfinch; and I'm a lucky man; ay, and you are a lucky woman too, madam! We are all in luck!

Gold. Ay, damme, old one, you have been concerned in many a good thing in your time!

Silky. Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha! To be sure I have—I must provide for my family, Mr. Goldfinch!

Widow. It is indeed a fortunate event—Do you not participate my raptures, Mr. Goldfinch?

Gold. To be sure——It's a deep scheme——It's knowing a thing or two, eh, old one? Pigeoning the green horns!

Silky. All so safe too, so snug—I am so pleased, and so happy! It's all our own—Not a soul will know of it but our three selves——

Gold. O, yes—one more, old one——

Silky. [*Alarmed.*] Ay—Who? Who?

Gold. Your father—Beelzebub.

Silky. Lord, Mr. Goldfinch, don't terrify me

Widow. To be sure, it must be owned, you are a shocking old rogue, Mr. Silky; but there is no doing without you—So make haste with your deeds and your extortions; for really we should be very glad to be rid of your company——

Silky. Well, well, I'm ready—I'll not long interrupt your amorous haste. I am a man of business—I expected how it would be, and have a legal instrument here, ready drawn up by my own hand; which, when it is signed and sealed, will make all safe.

Widow. But where is the will?

Silky. Oh, I have it. First, however, let us be secure.

[*Locks both the Chamber Doors; is going to read, but looks round, sees the Closet Doors, and, with great Anxiety and Cunning, locks them too.*]

Gold. You're an old trader in sin—There's no being too deep for you!

Silky. Ah, ha, ha, ha! Do you think so, Mr. Goldfinch?

Gold. But I should like to see you on your death-bed. *[A Blow from one of the Closets.]*

Silky. Bless my soul!—What's that?

Gold. Zounds!—Odd enough—I believe he's coming for you before your time!

Widow. It was very strange!

Silky. I declare, I am all of a tremble!

Widow. Come, come, let us get the shocking business over—Where is the will?

Gold. Don't shake so, man!

Silky. Well, well—First sign the bond—*[WIDOW and GOLDFINCH, going to sign, another Knock heard.]*
Lord have mercy upon me!—

Gold. I smell sulphur!

Widow. Save me, Mr. Goldfinch!

Silky. The candles burn blue! *[Pause.]*

Gold. Pshaw!—Zounds, it's only some cat in the closet.

Silky. I heard it in both the closets!

Gold. Why then there are two cats——Come, I'll sign—*[WIDOW and GOLDFINCH sign the Bond.]*

Silky. Where's the promise?

Gold. Here it is—*[Laying it on the Table.]*

Silky. And here is the will—which, that all may be safe, we will immediately commit to the flames—

[Is going to burn it at the Candle. Four successive loud Knocks are heard, one from each of the Doors. SILKY starts, drops one Candle, and overturns the other—The Stage dark.]

Silky. Lord have mercy upon us!

Gold. My hair stands on end!

[Violent Knocking at both Closets, and at the Doors.]

Widow. Save me, Mr. Goldfinch!—Protect me! Ah!
[*Shrieks.*

[*SULKY and MILFORD burst open the Closets, and seize on the Bond and Promise:—then open the Chamber Doors, at one of which*

Enter JENNY, with Lights; and, at the other, SOPHIA, HARRY DORNTON, and MR. DORNTON.

Soph. Dear ma', what's the matter?

Sulky. Where's the will? [*SILKY recovers himself, and snatches it up.*] Give it me, you old scoundrel!—Give it me this instant, or I'll throttle you!

[*Wrests it from him.*

Milf. So, gentlemen—You are a pretty pair of knaves!

Sulky. And you are a very worthy lady!

Widow. Don't talk to me, man!—Don't talk to me!—I shall never recover my senses again!

Harry. What has happened, gentlemen? How came you thus all locked up together?

Dorn. Are you here, Mr. Silky?

Sulky. Yes—There's the honest, grateful, friendly, Mr. Silky! Who would betray his friends, plunder the living, and defraud the dead, for the ease of his conscience, and to provide for his family!

Gold. Old one—You're done up!

Sulky. And here is the girlish old coquette, who would rob her daughter, and leave her husband's son to rot in a dungeon, that she might marry the first fool she could find.

Gold. Widow—You're dished!—[*SULKY examines the Will.*] Lost your last chance.

Dorn. A broken gamester, nurtured in idleness, ignorance and dissipation; whose ridings, racings, and drivings, are over, and whose whole train of horses, dogs, curricles, phaetons and fooleries must come to the hammer immediately, is no great loss.—I knew

your father, sir—'tis happy for him, that he is dead !
—if you will forsake these forcourses, and apply to trade——

Gold. Damn trade !—Who's for the spring meet-
in—Cross 'em and wind 'em—Seven to five you
don't name the winner—I'm for life and a curricule—
A cut at the caster, and the long odds—Damn trade
—The four aces, a back hand, and a lucky nick—I'm
a deep one—That's your sort ! [*Exit.*

Sulky. And now, madam——

Widow. Keep off, monster ! You smell of malice,
cruelty, and persecution.

Sulky. No, madam, I smell of honesty :—A drug
you nauseate, but with which you must forcibly be
dosed.—I have glanced over the will, and find I have
the power.

Widow. Let me go, goblin !——You are a hideous
person, and I hate the sight of you !—Your breast is
flint !—Flint, unfeeling Gorgon ! and I abominate
you ! [[*Exit into an inner Chamber.*

Soph. Nah, you are a kind, good, cross old soul,
and I am sure you will forgive my poor ma'.—We
ought all to forget and forgive—Ought not we, Mr.
Dornton ?

Harry. [*With Rapture, and looking to his Father.*]
Do you hear, sir ?

Dorn. Harry has told me of your innocent, pure,
and unsuspecting heart—I love you for having called
me an ugly monster.

Soph. [*To HARRY.*] La, Mr. Dornton, how could
you——

Sulky. Harry—Give me your hand——You have
a generous and a noble nature ! But your generosity
would have proved more pernicious than even your
dissipation.—No misfortunes, no, not the beggary and
ruin of a father, could justify so unprincipled a mar-
riage !

Dorn. And now, [*To MR. SULKY.*] My friend—

Milf. My father——

Harry. My——

Sulky. Whoo!—If you wish to get another word from me to-night, have done.—[*Turning to SILKY.*] I hate fawning.

Silky. Ah, Mr. Sulky, you will have your humour.

Sulky. The indiscriminating generosity of this young man supported you in your day of distress; for which, serpent like, you turned to sting your preserver.

Silky. Ah, you will have your humour.

Sulky. Yes—and it is my humour to see, that your villainy shall be exposed in its true colours. Hypocrisy, falsehood, and fraud, are your familiars. To screen your avarice, you made it believed, that this gentleman had been the cause of lodging the detainers, and had done the dirty work, of which even you were ashamed. But the creditors shall receive their full demand.

Dorn. The proposal is just. Listen to that worthy man; and, if you can, be honest with a good grace. Every thing will then be readily adjusted, and, I hope, to the satisfaction of all parties. [Exit Omnes.]

THE END.

DESERTED DAUGHTER



LADY ANNE. — FORGIVE THIS RUDE TUMULT
OF AFFECTION.

ACT V.

SCENE II.

DRAWN BY C. HEATH

PUBLISHED BY LONGMAN & CO

ENGRAVED BY POOLE

1807

†

THE
DESERTED DAUGHTER;

A COMEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS;

By THOMAS HOLCROFT.

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRINTER,
LONDON.

REMARKS.

This comedy had a very favourable reception. It has plot, characters, and incidents, worthy of admiration, though far less prominent than those which are contained in some of the author's more fortunate works.

The deserted daughter herself is not of so high importance in the drama as the author might have made her—she is interesting, but not sufficiently so. Perhaps her affected knowledge in the mysteries of Lavater, and the unfeeling and ill-bred manner with which she tells her friends they bear signs of guilt in their features, may diminish that concern for her situation, which the proofs of a better understanding and more sensibility of heart might have excited.

Lady Anne would be the heroine of the play, and a much more important character than Joanna, but that she too often calls to the recollection Cibber's Lady Easy. Still there is instruction to be gained from this patient wife, even by those females who are well acquainted with her in "The Careless Husband."

Mordent is a character of general instruction. Such are the characters of Item, Grime, and Clement.

The praise, indeed, so justly bestowed on all the works of Mr. Holcroft is—that instruction and information ever accompany amusement.

To many readers, the part of Donald will be wholly unintelligible. Dramatic authors, in search of variety of character, are too apt to disgrace their dialogue, and cloud their meaning, by the introduction of persons into their plays, whose only worth and distinction consist in their not being able to speak plain English.

Munden's intelligent face is requisite to every line of this part, to make it generally understood.

In referring to the original performers in this play, it is impossible to pass over the manner in which Mr. Quick acted the part of Item. In that scene, where he first misses his book of accounts, his agitation was so highly interesting, that the audience, though they hated him for his villany, still felt a degree of compassion for his sufferings. But, in the meeting with his nephew, which follows—where he inquires, then suspects, then accuses, then is convinced; now threatens, and now sues for pity—no tragedian could have better expressed the perturbed state of a murderer's mind, than this comic actor described the violent passions which shook his frightened soul!

The author had great merit in conceiving this novel situation for a professed comedian; even what is termed a low comedian; and the effect repaid him for his judgment.

There is a circumstance in this drama, respecting the fear lest Lady Anne should know that her hus-

band was ever married, previous to his marriage with her, and some suspicions concerning his child, which seem to depend on certain points of extreme delicacy ; such as are of the utmost importance to all authors of plays, as well as of novels. But when, by degrees, the fashionable world shall have become so philosophic in love, and concerning all the rights of wedlock, that scarce any event in gallantry shall create embarrassment on the score of refined sentiments, the resources of an author, in his profession, will be then nearly destroyed ; for scrupulous purity of character, and refinement in sensations, are the delightful origin of all those passions, those powerful impulses of the mind, on which works of imagination are chiefly founded.

As “The Deserted Daughter” has not been written many years, the reader of fashion will possibly be surprised, that the wife of Mordent should feel the slightest concern on account of her husband’s former or present excesses, in the character of a libertine lover.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MORDENT
CHEVERIL
LENNOX
ITEM
GRIME
CLEMENT
DONALD

Mr. Pope.
Mr. Lewis.
Mr. Harley.
Mr. Quick.
Mr. Bernard.
Mr. Middleton.
Mr. Munden.

JOANNA
MRS. SARSNET
MRS. ENFIELD
LADY ANNE

Miss Wallis.
Mrs. Mattocks.
Mrs. Cornelys.
Mrs. Pope.

SCENE—London.

THE
DESERTED DAUGHTER.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The House of Mr. MORDENT.

MORDENT and DONALD, in Anger.

Don. Gin the black de'el glowr at me, I'ze tell ye my mind! Dischairge me an ye wull: I a been nae mair but therty years i' the faimily. I care nae for yeer canker'd girns! An ye wad nae hear fashus tales, ye munna be guilty o' fow deeds!

Mor. [*Looking anxiously round.*] Will you speak in a lower key?—Earth is wholly inhabited by harpies, and I am eternally haunted by the most malignant of them!

Don. An I get nae tidings of her to-day, I'ze advertize for her i' the public papers! Ay, and I'ze gar yeer name be imprented at full langth!

Mor. [*Terrified.*] Print my name?

Don. The de'el hike me on his horns gin I dunna.

Mor. Demon! I'll blow your brains out!

Don. Fiz, wi' your flash i' the pan ! I dunna fear ye ! Yeer rash and mad enoch ! Sham betide ye ! A father abandon his cheeld ?

Mor. Leprosy seize your licentious tongue, will you speak lower ? Did I abandon her ?

Don. Ye wad nae acknowledge her ; wad nae see her ; never frae the time that she war a wee tot at the knee ! Gin ye had a hairt ye wad nae aixpose her tul——
[*Holding up his Hands in Terror.*]

Mor. What ?

Don. Tramp the streets ! Aixpald the warld of onesty by her ain father ! And why, trow ? She is a naitural cheeld ! To beget cheldren, and then turn them adrift to beg, steal, or stairve, is a damned un-naitural deed !

Mor. Prophet of evil ! Would you tell all the family ? Expose me to my wife ?

Don. I'ze aixpose ye tul the whole warld, gin I dunna find her ! And what the muckle better shall I be gin I do ? A thrawart poverty maun be her lot ! Ye ha' diced, and drabbed, and squandered, and mortgaged, till ye wull na' hae a bawbee tul yeersal !

Mor. Cease your croaking, raven ! Do you govern this house, or I ?

Don. Govern, trow ? Balzebub himsal is the governor ! There is yeer pett steward ! An auld whilly wha ! Tak warning ! I ha' toud ye aforetime, and I tell ye again, he's a rascal.

Mor. Viper, 'tis false ! If the earth hold an honest man, Mr. Item is he.

Don. Onest ? A juggling loon o' hell ! He feigns to borrow the siller for ye wetch he lends himsal ; and the walthy possassions ye lang syne held wull eftsoon be aw his ain.

Mor. I say, 'tis false ! His truth, integrity, and zeal, are unexampled !

Don. Marcy o' God, ye'er bewetched !

Mor. What a den of misery is this world ! Swarm

ing with one set of fiends that raise the whirlwind of the passions; and with another, that beset and tantalize the bewildered wretch, for having been overtaken by the storm!

Don. Poor Joanna! Winsom lassey!—I'ze keep my ward!

Mor. Can nothing stop your pestiferous tongue? Have I not fifty times descended to explanation, and shown you, that I must not, cannot, own her?

Don. Dare not! Ye hanna the hairt to be onest! Ye bogle at shaidows!

Mor. Pertinacious devil! The public clamour and disgrace, the affected sufferings, and insulting forbearance, of Lady Anne, the resentment of her imperious family, are these shadows?

Enter MRS. SARSNET.

Mrs. S. What is it you are pleased to be talking, pray, about my lady, Mr. Scotch Donald?

Don. Troth, Mrs. English Sarsnet, nae ward o' ill.

Mrs. S. Ill, truly! No, sir, my lady may defy her worst enemies. Though there are folks, who ought to adore the very ground she treads upon, that use her like a Turk.

Mor. How now?

Mrs. S. I name no names.

Mor. Who sent for you here, mistress?

Mrs. S. My lady sent me here, sir.

Mor. And did she bid you behave with impertinence?

Mrs. S. She, indeed! A dear suffering saint! She bid me always behave with affability and decorum: and so I would, if I could. But it would provoke an angel!

Mor. And what is it your wisdom thinks so provoking?

Mrs. S. To see a sweet lady sit for hours, and pine and grieve; and then, when some folks are in

sight, pretend to smile, and be all assination and contentment, when all the while her poor heart is ready to break!

Mor. Then she complains to you?

Mrs. S. I said no such thing, sir! No: she complains to no christian soul; more's the shame! I wish some folks had a little of my spirit; other folks, mayhap, mut find the difference!

Don. Troth, an yee wad nae be speaking o' that, Mrs. Sarsnet.

Mrs. S. A poor weak woman, who can only take her own part by crying, and fainting.

Don. Ye forget, Mrs. Sarsnet, there are some poor weak women, that ha' tongues and nails.

Mrs. S. Have they, Mr. Snapshort? Why, then, if I had you for a husband, mayhap I would let you see that I could use them.

Don. The muckle de'el may doubt yee!

Mrs. S. It's a shame, Mr. Donald, for you to be getting into corners, and whispering, and peering, and plotting, to my lady's dishonour.

Don. [*Angry.*] I plotting? How dare yee, Mrs. Sarsnet?

Mor. Silence, with you both!

Mrs. S. You ought to be ashamed of making yourself a skip-jack go-between.

Don. I a skip-jack? Varra weel! Yee hear, sir, what are my thanks! 'Tis unco weel! I hae but my desairts! True enoch, I am a go-between!

Mrs. S. Yes, yes; we know that very well, Mr. Donald.

Don. But nae sic go-between as yee, Mrs. Malapert, may thenk me. I hae been a trust worthy caterer tul the faimily: [*To MORDENT.*] a slave tul yeer revels, and yeer roots, and yeer banquetings. 'Tis lang syne ye made me yeer purveyor; but nae mon ever yet made me his pander!

Mor. Begone! See if Mr. Item is returned.

Mrs. S. Ah! There's another!

Don. Skip-jack? Go-between? Mag's malison o' yeer spitefoo' tongue-gab! [Exit.

Mor. Did your lady, I say, instruct you to behave with this insolence?

Mrs. S. You know very well, sir, my lady is the best of wives! she sent me on a civil message, and bid me speak with propriety: and so, if speaking one's mind, and telling the truth, be a fault, it's all my own.

Mor. I'll put an end to this.

Mrs. S. Oh, to be sure; you may tell my lady, and get me turned away, if you please; because, I know very well, if you bid her, she will do it.

Mor. Prometheus and his vulture is no fable!

Mrs. S. But, as it is all for love of my lady, I am sure the Earl of Oldcrest, her father, will give me a situation. He knows, mayhap, more than you may think. So does the Viscount, her brother, too; her aunt, Lady Mary, and her uncle, the Bishop: and every body is not obliged to be so blind and so tame as my lady.

Mor. What is it they know?

Mrs. S. That's more than I can say; but they have all been here, and my lady desires to speak with you.

Mor. [Aside.] Indeed!—I have no leisure.

Mrs. S. Ha! I told my lady so.

Mor. Begone! Inform your lady, I have tormentors enough; and have no inclination to increase the number. [Exit.

Mrs. S. I prognostified the answer!—A good for nothing chap!—I know very well what is becoming of a husband. He should love his wife, dearly, by day and by night! he should wait upon her; and give her her own way; and keep her from the cold, and the wet; and provide her with every thing comfortable; and if she happen to be in an ill humour, should coax her, and bear a little snubbing patiently. Humph! The fellows! What are they good for? [Exit,

SCENE II.

The Steward's Room.

ITEM and GRIME meeting.

Item. [*Eagerly.*] My dear Grime, I am glad you are come. Well, is the deed prepared?

Grime. Ready for sealing. Mr. Mordent never examines what he signs; he trusts all to you.

Item. We cannot be too safe. But, this other affair? this Joanna? What have you done? Have you decoyed her to Mrs. Enfield's?

Grime. Really, Mr. Item, she is so fine a creature, that, when I consigned her over, I am not a true christian if I did not feel such a twinge here!—

Item. Curse your twinges! Is she safe? Did she suspect nothing?

Grime. No, no; the poor innocent blessed herself, to think what a kind protectress Providence had sent her.

Item. [*Joy.*] That is well! That is well!

Grime. But I do not yet understand why you should seek the ruin of this lovely creature?

Item. I? You mistake: 'tis Mr. Mordent!

Grime. What, wish destruction to his child?

Item. No, no. We neither of us seek her harm; but our own safety.

Grime. Which way?

Item. He has various tormentors; his wife, or rather her proud relations, are among the chief; and he dreads they should come to the knowledge of this secret. But his strongest terror is of being detected, in having for years disowned a child, who, if now produced, would be his everlasting disgrace.

Grime. Then he does not know that his daughter is now in the house of Mrs. Enfield?

Item. Not a word. His plan, for the present, is to settle her in some profession; for this he will bestow a thousand pounds, which, ha! ha! ha! I am to expend.

Grime. [*Significantly.*] Or keep?

Item. [*Aside.*] Plague! I have said too much.

Grime. [*Aside.*] Oh, ho! A thousand pounds?

Item. That—that, my dear Grime, would be a paltry motive.

Grime. [*Aside.*] I'll have my share!

Item. Mr. Mordent has been all his life squandering, like a blockhead, what I have been prudently picking up.

Grime. And pretty pickings you have had, Mr. Item!

Item. [*Exulting.*] I have him in the toils! Interest accumulating upon interest, and all in arrear. I can foreclose upon him when I please, for all except the Berkshire estate; and, by this second mortgage, agreeably to the deed you have brought, equity of redemption will be forfeited, and that, as well as the rest, will then be mine.

Grime. If he had but signed and sealed——

Item. Which he shall do this very day.

Grime. Still, why are you the enemy of Joanna? What have you to fear from her?

Item. Much! Very much! An action of recovery!

Grime. How so? She has no title—she is illegitimate!

Item. Would she were! No, no; a lawful daughter, born in wedlock; her mother poor, but virtuous, and died in childbed. Fearful it should injure his second marriage with Lady Anne, he never produced the infant, but told his man, Donald, it was a natural

daughter, and, by his intermission, secretly maintained and had her educated.

Grime. Why not employ the same agent still?

Item. Because this Donald has got the fool's disease, pity, and threatens to make Mordent own his daughter, or impeach.

Grime. And it was prudent to place her beyond Donald's knowledge?

Item. It was.

Grime. Ha! 'Tis a strange world! Well, now, Mr. Item, give me leave to say a word or two on my own affairs.

Item. To be sure, my dear friend! Speak, and spare not.

Grime. There is the thousand pounds, you mentioned.

Item. [*Aside.*] Hem!

Grime. Then the premium on this mortgage—In short, Mr. Item, I do all your business, stand in your shoes——

Item. You are my right hand, the apple of my eye!

Grime. Ay, but——

Item. The dearest friend I have on earth!

Grime. The division of profits——

Item. Don't mention it. Am not I your friend? I shall not live for ever.

Grime. No, nor I neither. Friendship——

Item. Don't think of it. You can't distrust me! The first and best friend you ever had!

Grime. Fine words——

Item. [*Evading.*] Yonder is my nephew. [*Calls.*] Clement!

Enter CLEMENT.

Clem. Sir.

Item. Fetch the title deeds of the Berkshire estate from my good friend Mr. Grime's.

Grime. Well, but—

Item. Any time, to-day.

Clem. Very well, sir.

Grime. Once again, Mr. Item—

Item. And, Clement!

Grime. I say, the division—

Item. [*Listens.*] Hark! I hear Mr. Mordent!

Grime. [*Aside.*] It shall not pass off thus. I begin to know you!

Item. I would not have you seen just now—My dear Grime! My kind friend! Through this door Some other opportunity! Pray oblige me!

Grime. Well, well—[*Aside.*] The next time we meet, you shall know more of my mind.

[*Exit GRIME.*

Item. [*Angry.*] The rascal begins to grow troublesome!—Take care of the steps, good Mr. Grime!

[*Follows.*

Enter MORDENT.

Mor. What is life? A continual cloud; pregnant! with mischief, malignity, disease, and death. Happiness? An ignis fatuus. Pleasure? A non-entity. Existence? A misfortune, a burden. None but fools condescend to live. Men exert their whole faculties to torture one another. Animals are the prey of animals. Flowers bloom to be plucked and perish. The very grass grows to be torn and eaten: trees to be mangled, sawed, rooted up, and burned. The whole is a system of exquisite misery, and I have my full proportion!—Oh! this girl! Why am I thus perturbed concerning her! She can but be wretched; and wretchedness is the certain fate of all!

Enter ITEM.

Well, my good Mr Item, this poor Joanna! What have you done? Can you secure her happiness? Pshaw! Fool! Can you lighten her misery? I can think of

nothing but her; though distraction is in every thought!

Item. 'Tis a serious affair: very serious—you ought to do nothing lightly.

Mor. Turned adrift, rejected of all, no relation, no friend, never acknowledged, never?

Item. My advice, you know, sir, was at once boldly to produce her, as your daughter. No matter for the impertinent clamours and questions of who her mother was, and what became of her; why the child was never owned; where she had been concealed, and for what purposes?

Mor. Ay, ay, ay! The malignant sneers of friends, the cutting calumny of enemies, the reproaches of Lady Anne, the insults of her pompous proud family!

Item. For my part, I obey your commands, but I cannot approve them.

Mor. My late ward, Mr. Cheveril, should he hear of it, what would he think?—Then this Berkshire mortgage!

Item. Ay, there again! Totally opposite to my advice.

Mor. Can you show me any other possible way of paying my debts?

Item. The danger of signing it is extreme!

Mor. 'Tis ruin!

Item. Young Cheveril, I own, has demands.

Mor. Which must be paid.

Item. Then the out-standing bills—tradesmen are provokingly insolent!

Mor. Ay, ay! They, like the rest, have their appointed office of torture!

Item. Well, remember, I have given you fair warning.

Mor. Certainly! You do your part, and with the best intentions; goad, and sting, and add your quantum to the sum of suffering! The consistency of evil is amazing! good and bad, all concur!—Is the deed ready?

Item. I must first read it through.

Mor. Do so. I leave it all to you.

Item. But that will not take ten minutes.

Mor. I will be back presently. The gulf is before me, plunge I must, and to plunge blindfold will be to cheat the devil of some part of the pain! [Exit.

Item. [Following.] Nay, if you will not be warned, 'tis not my fault. [Exit.

SCENE III.

The Dressing Room of LADY ANNE.

LADY ANNE and MRS. SARSNET.

Mrs. S. I told your ladyship he would refuse.

Lady A. What reason did he give?

Mrs. S. Reason, forsooth! Husbands never have any reason!

Lady A. [To herself.] Unkind man! Why does he thus wish to avoid me?

Mrs. S. He keeps his distance, both day and night. But I would teach him to sleep in two beds! A pretty fashion, truly! I would tell him I was afraid of ghosts; and so I married, because I could not, nor I would not, lie alone. So let him remember that.

Lady A. Why were you so long in bringing the message back?

Mrs. S. Why that is what I have to tell your ladyship. If there is not bad doings, say I am no witch.

Lady A. What do you mean?

Mrs. S. Your ladyship must not be angry; but you know I can't help having a sharp eye and a quick ear of my own.

Lady A. What have you been doing now?

Mrs. S. So I saw my master go into the steward's room.

Lady A. [*Endeavouring to suppress her Curiosity.*] Pshaw! Folly! What of that?

Mrs. S. So I had all my seven senses and my eye-teeth about me.—

Lady A. Pray have done!

Mrs. S. So I clapped my ear to the key-hole; and then I heard a—whuz, buz—

Lady A. This was very improper!

Mrs. S. So I could only catch up a word here and there: and the first was summut about—of a child!

Lady A. A child!

Mrs. S. And a mother, my lady! Though for the matter of that, where there is a child, one's own natural penetrality will tell one there must be a mother.

Lady A. Of what weakness am I guilty!

Mrs. S. And I thought I caught the sound of Mr. Item of a fathering the child! and I'm positive he said it wuz against his conscience!

Lady A. Who said so?

Mrs. S. Mr. Item, my lady! And so, a little bit after, my master called somebody a poor injurious girl, and a prodigality of wit and beauty! So then I heard somebody's foot on the stairs, and I wuz fain to scamper.

Lady A. I know not why I listen to this indecent prattle! My over-anxious curiosity betrays me, and you are much too forward to profit by my weakness.

Mrs. S. Because you know, my lady, I love you in my heart; and it is all for your own good.

Lady A. A child! An injured girl! Yet why do I feel agitation? His infidelities have been too open, for me to be ignorant of them. And who has been to blame; he or I? Oh! doubtful and difficult question!

Mrs. S. But I'll come at the truth, I'll warrant me, in all its purtclers!

Lady A. Suffering, perhaps, under the consciousness of error, which the sight of me might increase, he flies from additional anguish. Oh, that I had the power to sooth and reconcile him to himself! Why will he not receive consolation from me?

Mrs. S. I'll rummage about.

Lady A. If I am unhappy, how must I be certain, that it is not my own fault? Where there is unhappiness, neither party can be wholly blameless.

Mrs. S. He ought to love and adore such a lady! and clothe her in satin and gold!

Lady A. Shall I tyrannize over the affections that I cannot win? If I want the power to please, let me correct my own defects, and not accuse my husband of insensibility! Oh, nothing is so killing, to a husband's love, as a discontented, irksome, wailing wife! let me be any thing but that!

Mrs. S. He is a barbarian Turk! and so I as good stold him.

Lady A. Yet have I not lost his love? Dreadful doubt! My family advise a separation, and, if this fatal loss be real, how is it to be avoided? Yet, I will not lightly yield! Let me hope my efforts will not be ineffectual. Would this agonizing contest were ended!

[*Exit.*

Mrs. S. She may say what she will, but I know very well she is the most miserable-est lady alive, and I could tear his eyes out! Husband, indeed! And so, because I listened to the fellow's love, and nonsense stuff, and took pity on him, when he was going to hang or drown himself, he must think, as soon as he has got me safe, to be my lord and master! I'd tell him another story! My lord and master, truly? [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

The House of MRS. ENFIELD.

MRS. ENFIELD *and* BETTY.

Mrs. E. And, mind me, treat her with great kindness and deference.

Betty. I'll be careful.

Mrs. E. Keep her in continual good humour: don't let her ask for any thing twice; and, above all things, listen to her complaints, and pity them.

Betty. My white handkerchief shall be at her service.

Mrs. E. Is the messenger returned?

Betty. Yes, madam; and there is no answer from Mr. Mordent, but Mr. Lennox sent word he will soon be here.

Mrs. E. Send her to me.

Betty. Yes, madam.

[*Exit.*

Mrs. E. She is young, and ignorant of the town! but, I can see, she has a quick and courageous spirit.

Enter JOANNA.

Mrs. E. Well, my sweet Joanna; do you think you can love me, and trust me, and follow my advice?

Joanna. Are you not my benevolent protectress, and will it not be my duty?

Mrs. E. Why that's a precious! Ay, ay; do but as I desire you, darling, and then!

Joanna. Oh, that I will! Come, set me to work.

Mrs. E. Ah, I won't kill you with work. Pretty dear ! Those delicate arms?—They were not made for work.

Joanna. Fie ! You must not tell me that. My mother is dead, and my father—[*Firmly.*] But I must bear my fate with fortitude. Labour is no punishment.

Mrs. E. Labour ? Oh, the beauty ! Chicken gloves, my lamb, for those white hands ! A noble looking-glass, to see that sweet form ! A fine chariot, to show off your charms ! These you ought to have, and a thousand other fine things. Ay, and if you will take my advice, have them you shall.

Joanna. Fine things ? Chariots ? No, no : not for me. To work, to work—But I'll willingly take your advice ; for, you are so kind, it cannot be ill ?

Mrs. E. Ill ? Heaven protect me ! I advise a dear, sweet, handsome creature to ill ?

Joanna. Handsome ? Fie ! an orphan ; fatherless !

Mrs. E. Ay, very true ! Ill ? No, no ; think me your parent.

Joanna. [*Snatches and kisses her Hand.*] Dear lady !

Mrs. E. Ah, my tender lamb ! Think of joy ! Think of pleasure !

Joanna. Be not so kind. You should not soften, but steel my heart ! Teach it to have neither fear nor feeling of wrong ; to laugh when others weep. Oh, I'll mock at sorrow !

Mrs. E. Do not think of it.

Joanna. Did you never see your father ?

Mrs. E. Anan, dear ?

Joanna. I never saw mine ! Do not even know his name : I had a strange desire to see him once, but once, and I was denied. I am a highspirited girl, but I would have kneeled to him ; would have kissed his feet ; and was refused—No matter !

Mrs. E. Forget it.

Joanna. Well, well !—Courage !—You must let

me work. I'll earn what I eat. I love you for your kindness, but I will not be dependent.

Mrs. E. Since you will ! You say, you can draw ?

Joanna. It has been my delight. I have studied the human countenance, have read Lavater.

Mrs. E. Anan ! Will you copy the engraving I showed you ?——

Joanna. What, the portrait of that strange——

Mrs. E. Mr. Mordent. [*Handing down a Frame.*]

Joanna. Mordent ?

Mrs. E. Of Portland Place.

Joanna. [*Examining.*] I don't quite like him !

Mrs. E. Why ?

Joanna. He's a wicked man.—

Mrs. E. Nay——

Joanna. A wild eye !—I hope he is not your relation.

Mrs. E. No ; but has been my very good friend.

Joanna. Take care of him !

Mrs. E. Can you judge so certainly ?

Joanna. Looking at such a face, who can fail ?
[*Examining MRS. ENFIELD.*] You are a worthy lady ; a kind lady ; your actions bespeak it ; and yet—Don't be angry—there is something about your features—that I don't like !

Mrs. E. Bless me, dear !

Joanna. I must be wrong, because you are good ! But you have not a good countenance. That's strange : I never saw such a thing before !—And the more I look, the less I like.

Mrs. E. [*Aside.*] Does she suspect me ?

Joanna. If ever I draw your face, I'll alter some of the lines. I'll make them such as I think virtue ought to have made them : open, honest, undaunted. You have such a number of little artful wrinkles, at the corners of your eyes !—You are very cunning !

Mrs. E. [*In a Tremor.*] What does she mean ?

Joanna. But what of that ? You are kind to me, and I fear no cunning, not I : You found me friendless, have given me work, and I would die to serve you ! So I'll copy that wild man's portrait.

Mrs. E. Wild ?

Joanna. Nay, for that matter, you need not fear him ; but, if you know any vain, foolish, young girls, that love flaunting, and will listen to fine promises, bid them beware of him !

Mrs. E. [*Aside.*] A little witch.

Enter BETTY.

Betty. Mr. Lennox is below, madam. [*Exit.*

Mrs. E. I am glad of that ! Come, my sweet Joanna, I'll introduce you to him.

Joanna. Me, madam ?

Mrs. E. Ay, child ! that I will. Every body shall know what an angel my dear young friend is.

Joanna. Consider, Madam—

Mrs. E. Nay, I am sure you will not refuse me this pleasure ? Come, come !

Joanna. You are too kind !

Mrs. E. Come, my precious.

Joanna. Well, I commit myself to your trust. Friendless and fatherless, you will be my guardian. You are too generous to injure the helpless, and the forlorn, and the lines in your face are false !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

An Antichamber in the House of MORDENT.

Enter MORDENT and CHEVERIL.

Chev. Grumble no more, guardy. Have done with prognosticating evil, 'tis all in vain : your gloomy reign is ended ; I am at liberty.

Mor. To play the fool !

Chev. I'm free, I'm alive, I'm beginning to exist !

Mor. Like a wretch at the stake, when the flames first reach him !

Chev. The whole world is before me, its pleasures are spread out, and I long to fall on ; the golden apples of delight hang inviting me to pluck, eat, and—

Mor. Be poisoned !

Chev. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Mor. As your guardian, I—

Chev. Damn guardianship, I have been guarded too long. Years out of number have I been fed with lean Latin, crabbed Greek, and an abominable olio of the four faculties ; served up with the jargon of Aristotle, the quirks of Thomas Aquinas,—My brain was a broker's shop ; the little good furniture it contained all hid by lumber .

Mor. Let me tell you, young sir—

Chev. Not now, your day is done.—I am on the wing to visit the regions of fruition and Paradise ; to banquet with the gods, and sip Ambrosia from the lips of Venus and Hebe, the Hours, the Loves, and the Graces !

Mor. You are lunatic !

Chev. No, I am just come to my senses ; for I am just come to my estate, high health, high spirits, eight thousand a year, and one and twenty.

Mor. Youth ! Riches ! Poor idiot ! Health too ? What is a man but a walking hospital ? You, boy, you, little as you suspect it, include within yourself a whole pharmacopœia of malady and mischief !

Chev. Zounds ! He'll persuade me presently I am Pandora's box !

Mor. So you are.

Chev. Why, guardy, you are mad !

Mor. True, or I should take the shortest way to get rid of misery, and instantly go hang myself.

Chev. What a picture !

Mor. Equal it in accuracy, if you can.

Chev. Why I am but a young artist ; However I can dash my brush at the canvass as daringly as you have done, so what think you [*Rapturously.*] of mirth, songs, and smiles ; youth, beauty, and kisses ; friendship, liberty, and love ; with a large capacious soul of benevolence, that can sooth the afflicted, succour the poor, heal the sick, instruct the ignorant, honour the wise, reform the bad, adore the good, and hug genius and virtue to the heart ?

Mor. Every feature a lie.

Chev. Curse me but I say the likeness is at least as good as yours, and I am sure the colouring is infinitely more delightful.

Enter DONALD.

Don. I'ze ganging aboot the business of the poor lassy, ken ye me ? Gin ye want me, I'ze be back in a blink.

Mor. Go to the devil, if you will ; so that you do not torment me.

Chev. Ha, friend Donald ! Don't you know that I'm of age ? Won't you revel and roar, my boy ? Why do you look so glum, old honesty ?

Don. Troth ye mistake the maitter, young gentleman ; I am an auld go-between.

Chev. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Don. It's varra true : wetch makes me unco blate. A helpless bairn has been cast upo' the wide warld, by a hairtless father, and I am a pairt o' the cause.

Mor. Again, Imp ?

Chev. A child deserted by the father !

Don. Ye well may show the gogle o' yeer eyn.

Chev. Is he poor ? Is he pennyless ?

Don. Much thereaboot, an I dunna miss my ken.

Chev. Bring the child to me, bring it to me, old

rueful, I'll be its father. I never fathered a child in my life, I long to begin.

Don. Ye seem truly to hae mair human affaction than some fathers.

Mor. Begone, leave us, bloodsucker! goblin! vampire!

Don. Yes—I'ze gang where I tow'd ye; and gin I dunna hear o' her, ye'ze hear o' me! [Exit.

Chev. Bring me the baby, Donald! Zounds, how it would delight me to father all the fatherless children in the world! poor little dears! I should have a plentiful brood!—And so, guardian, I want money.

Mor. What, to purchase destruction wholesale?

Chev. I have five hundred good, wicked, spirited, famous projects on hand. You have seventeen thousand pounds of mine, hard cash. I want it.

Mor. Seventeen thousand plagues!

Chev. Every farthing.

Mor. Your money, sir, is locked up in mortgages.

Chev. Locked up? Oh, damme, I'll unlock it. I'll send honest Grime to ye; he carries a master key.

Mor. Have you no regard to my convenience.

Chev. I'll pay the premium; and, if you want security, you may have mine. I must have money! The world must hear of me! I'll be a patron, and a subscriber, and a collector, and an amateur, and a connoisseur, and a dilletanti! I'll hunt, I'll race, I'll dice; I'll grub, plant, plan, and improve! I'll buy a stud, sell a forest, build a palace, and pull down a church. [Exit.

Mor. Mr. Cheveril!—He is flown—Why ay, with spirits equally wild, wanton, and ignorant of evil, I began my career. I have now lived long enough to discover, that universal nature is universal agony! O this rejected Joanna! Miserable girl! Well! Am not I miserable too? Who is not?—The dangers to which she may be exposed! The cruelty of utterly

abandoning her! never shall I again be at peace with myself!—

Lady Anne. [Without.] Where is your master?

Mor. Hark! My wife? She tortures me with her silent sufferings and her stifled sighs. Passion, bitter reproach, and violent menace, would be infinitely more supportable. In short, I have not deserved her kindness, and cannot endure it. [Exit.

Enter LADY ANNE.

Lady A. Mr. Mordent! Thus does he continually shun me! Why then do I haunt him? Why intrude myself upon him?—Must this have no end? Fond, foolish heart, these aches and pains are fruitless! Sleep in forgetfulness, cease to feel, and be at peace!

Mrs. Sarsnet. [Without.] I tell you, I can't stay!

Lady A. The stories, too, with which this kind but officious creature torments me—

Enter MRS. SARSNET, hastily.

Mrs. S. I've got it, my lady! I've got it!

Lady A. What is the matter now?

Mrs. S. Why, I'll tell your ladyship. A queer quandary kind of person brought my master a letter; which I knew was suspicious. So my master's coat was all powder; over here. [Significantly.] How he came by it, I don't know.

Lady A. Pshaw! Pray don't tease me.

Mrs. S. So, my lady, he took it off, and ordered one of the fellows to give it a brush. So, making a pretence, I was close at his heels.

Lady A. At whose heels?

Mrs. S. The footman's, my lady. So, while he was brushing, he had a wranglation with the cook; and turned about to gabble footman's gibberish with she; so I, having a hawk's eye, twirled my hand behind me, so, and felt in the pocket; and there I found

this written letter, which I sily slipped under my apron ; so—

Lady A. Take a letter out of your master's pocket ?

Mrs. S. Yes, my lady ; because being broke open, I read the contents, and found that it was from one Mrs. Enfield, to appoint an assassination between my master and a young girl.

Lady A. Give it me.

Mrs. S. Yes, my lady ; I was sure you could not but wish to see it.

Lady A. Mistress Sarsnet, I have frequently cautioned you against practices like these ; which are mean, dishonest, and pilfering.

Mrs. S. My lady !

Lady A. To have robbed your master of his money, would have been less culpable than to steal from him the knowledge of transactions which, because of their impropriety, he has not the courage to avow.

Mrs. S. [*Whimpering, and with Tokens of great Affection.*] It's very hard, because I can't bear your lady—ladyship's ill usage, and, and, and always feel as if my very stays were a bursting, to see your, your treatment, time after time—that I should get myself ill, ill, ill will, because I love you from the very bottom of my heart !

Lady A. I have winked at these liberties too often : I'll suffer them no longer.

Mrs. S. Very—very well—Since your ladyship is so angry, you may turn, turn, me away, if you please, and quite break, break, break my heart !

Lady A. No : the fault is more than half my own : but, from this time, I seriously warn you against such improper, such base actions.

Mrs. S. Very—very well, my lady ! I'll be deaf, and dumb, and blind ! and, when I see you treated worser than a savage, I'll burst twenty laces a day, before I'll speak a word !

Lady A. [*With great kindness.*] What you have done

has been affectionately meant. I am sorry to have given you pain, and to have excited your tears. But I must earnestly desire you will commit no more such mistakes. They are wrong, in themselves; and every way fatal to my peace.

Mrs. S. [*Catching and kissing her Hand.*] You are the tenderest and best of ladies! and I know who is an unfeeling brute! [*Exit LADY ANNE.*]

Enter LENNOX and CHEVERIL.

Len. Pray, Mistress Sarsnet, is Mr. Mordent within?

Mrs. S. Indeed, sir, I don't know! [*Muttering.*] Mr. Mordent is a good for nothing chap! [*Exit.*]

Len. I'll bet you a thousand, Cheveril, your charmer does not equal the girl I have this moment left.

Chev. Done, for ten thousand!

Len. You would lose.

Chev. You never beheld so peerless a beauty!

Len. How did you become acquainted with her?

Chev. We are not yet acquainted; [*Sighs.*] and I begin to fear we never shall be.

Len. Oh, oh!

Chev. I met her three times in the Green Park. The first moment I gazed at her with admiration—as soon as she was gone by!

Len. Gone by?

Chev. Good manners, you know, would not let me stare her in the face. Such a shape! Such elegance! The next time I determined to speak to her, and approached as resolutely as Hercules to the Hydra.

Len. A good simile for a beauty!

Chev. I had studied a speech; but, somehow, there was such a sweet severity in her looks—I—I had not the power to utter a word!

Len. Courageous lover!

Chev. The third time however, it being a little

darker, for it was always in the evening, I was more undaunted : so, fully determined to throw myself at her feet and declare my passion, up I marched ! But, as the devil would have it, she turned and looked me full in the face ; and her beauty, and—and virtue—and—and modesty, were so awful—that my heart sunk within me !

Len. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Chev. It is now a fortnight since ; and, though I have walked the Green Park, morning, noon, and night, every day, I could never once again set eyes on her ! Intolerable booby that I was, to lose three such precious opportunities !

Len. Of making love to a lady's maid ?

Chev. Oh for one momentary glance, that I might give vent to the passion that devours me !

Len. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Chev. What ! You think I dare not ?

Len. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Look you, Cheveril, I know you : a lighted match and the mouth of a cannon could not cow you like the approach of a petticoat.

Chev. I !—Afraid of women ? Damme, I don't understand having my character attacked and traduced ! Make a Master Jackey of me ? I am a wicked one !

Len. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Wicked ? You are as conscientious as a drunken methodist, or as a dying miser ! You are not only afraid of the woman but of the sin !

Chev. Why, if—No, damme, 'tis not true ! I have no more conscience than yourself.

Len. Me ? I have a deal of conscience. Pleasure, I own, can tempt me ; but I make no pretensions, like you, to sin for the sake of reputation.

Chev. Sir, I make no such pretensions ! I am, indeed, resolved to be a fellow of enterprise, pith, and soul ; but not by vile rascally methods. I'll love all the women, and perhaps trick some of the men ; but not seduce wives, ruin daughters, and murder husbands and fathers. No ! If I cannot be wicked, without

being criminal, damme if I do not live and die an honest dull dog! [Exit.

Enter MORDENT, searching his Pockets.

Mor. Curse the letter—It's gone—Careless booby.

Len. What's the matter?

Mor. A thousand to one but it has fallen into the hands of Lady Anne!

Len. What have you lost?

Mor. [Still searching.] A damned epistle, from—

Len. Hem!

Enter LADY ANNE.

Lady A. Mr. Mordent, I am glad to meet with you!

Mor. Glad? Is the thing so difficult?

Lady A. I did not say so: I meant nothing unkind.

Mor. Ha! ha! ha!

Lady A. Indeed I did not—I wish to speak to you.

Mor. [To LENNOX retiring.] Stay where you are, Lennox. What, man, you are in no fear of soothing insult! You are not married.

Len. I'll return in five minutes.

[Exit: MORDENT following.]

Lady A. Pray, Mr. Mordent—

Mor. Pshaw! I know I am a bear at the stake: don't shorten my tether.

Lady A. I have a paper— [Showing the Letter.]

Mor. [Returning.] Ay, ay! I know it. Come, begin! I am prepared.

Lady A. It fell into my hands by the reprehensible but unauthorized curiosity of my woman.

Mor. Ha! ha! ha!

Lady A. Indeed, I have never opened it.

Mor. Nor she either?

Lady A. Yes; but that is not my fault.

Mor. Yours indeed? Impossible?

Lady A. The heart, which I cannot secure by affection, I will not alienate by suspecting.

[Returns the Letter.]

Mor. Pshaw! Meekness is but mockery, forbearance insult.

Lady A. How shall I behave? Which way frame my words and looks, so as not to offend? 'Would I could discover?

Mor. You never complain? You have no jealousy?

Lady A. Indeed, I have been very obstinately blind.

Mor. Ay, ay! Patience on a monument!

Lady A. Reproach, at least, has never escaped my lips.

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! As if lips were the only instruments of upbraiding! No deep fetched sighs? No pale melancholy glances? No obvious hiding of the ever ready tear?

Lady A. I fear I have been to blame? Indeed I am sorry that my sensations have been so acute.

Mor. You accuse? You give a husband pain? Insolent supposition!

Lady A. I sincerely wish, my dear, you gave no more than I intend to give!

Mor. There! Did not I say so? Ha! ha! ha! You accuse?

Lady A. I am wrong! I forgot myself! Pray forgive me! Why am I subject to these mistakes?

Mor. You are all angel!

Lady A. Would I were!

Mor. And I all demon!

Lady A. Do not, Mr. Mordent, by the dear affection you once bore—

Mor. There! There! The affection I once bore?

Lady A. Heavens! Must I ever be fated to wound, when it is most the wish of my soul to heal?

Mor. Why was the Earl of Oldcrest here this morning? Why are these family consultations held?

Lady A. They are contrary to my wish.

Mor. A separation, I hear, is the subject of them?

Lady A. But not countenanced by me.

Mor. Pretending in pity to spare me yourself, they are to be set upon me.

Lady A. Never! Heaven be my judge, never!

Mor. I am to be subjected to their imperious dictates.

Lady A. I own they have lately been very urgent with me, to return to my father; but, were you only kind, their solicitations would be vain indeed. Oh! take pity on yourself and me, and teach me to regain your lost affections, or, if that be too great a blessing to hope, there is still one evil, which I would suffer any other torture to escape. Think, if you can, that I no longer love; treat me with unkindness; neglect, accuse, do any thing—but hate me! Let me not endure that last stage of misery! But—Oh, Heavens!—if our former endearments must end in that, have mercy, and retard or conceal it as long as you can.

[*Exit.*

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! What are barbs, and stings, and poisoned arrows? Pitiful instruments! Thou, triumphant wretchedness, usest these but on small occasions; they want pungency!

Enter LENNOX.

Len. May I come in?

Mor. Ay, ay!—Now am I ripe for mischief.

Len. You seem out of temper! What has happened?

Mor. Trifles, trifles! She has got the letter.

Len. From whom?

Mor. Mrs. Enfield's.

Len. Zounds!

Mor. An invitation to a new sample of beauty. She has seen it; returned it; has graciously forgiven; has racked, has driven me mad.

Len. [*Suspiciously.*] And do you mean to go?

Mor. [*Wildly.*] Ay will I! Since devil I am, devil let me be! It will be some, though but a petty vengeance, for prying.

Len. You must not.

Mor. [*Passionately.*] Indeed but I will.

Len. We have long been friends, and fellow-sinners; but, in these affairs, we have always behaved honourably.

Mor. What then?

Len. I have seen the girl!

Mor. Where?

Len. At Enfield's.

Mor. Did she write to you, too?

Len. She did. An angel Mordent.

Mor. Ha! ha! ha!

Len. An angel! I am seriously and deeply smitten.

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! Marry her, and make wretchedness secure.

Len. No; but I am fixed for life. Such animation! Such soul! The finest creature my eyes ever beheld.

Mor. I'll see her.

Len. No; I cannot consent.

Mor. Why so? I'll aid you to carry her off.

Len. Are you serious!

Mor. As malice can make me! The sex have been worse to me than plague, pestilence, and famine.

Len. And what have you been to them?

Mor. No matter: I'll have my revenge!

Len. And you will aid me in this business?

Mor. I will.

Len. Solemnly? on your word and honour?

Mor. I tell you, I will!

Len. Why then, see her you shall; but in my company, observe.

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! Right, anticipate your torments.

Len. On this condition, I shall thank you for your assistance and advice.

Mor. Why, ay, Advice! I too, fool that I am, knowing the impotence of man to avert mischief, I wish for advice! I—[*Aside.*] There may be danger in telling him?

Len. Well?

Mor. A—A friend of mine has a child; suppose it a—a natural child; that he knows not how properly to dispose of.

Len. [*Ironical gravity.*] A natural child, that he knows not how properly to dispose of.

Mor. Yes.

Len. Could not he sell it to the kidnappers?

Mor. Pshaw!

Len. There are honest overseers that will take it, fifty pounds down.

Mor. Not an infant: twenty years of age.

Len. Oh, then indeed, there are crimp sergeants.

Mor. When I put a serious question, I expect a serious answer.

Len. [*Indignation.*] Serious! And ask what a man is to do with his child.

Mor. Suppose he should have legitimate offspring?

Len. [*Sneer.*] Oh, oh, legitimate, ha! Made of other metal? A different manufacture?

Mor. You won't hear! He provided for her.

Len. A female, too?

Mor. Would have continued to provide, but she rejected his assistance.

Len. How so?

Mor. Unless he would see her, and embrace her; that is, whine over, acknowledge her, and bestow his blessing.

Len. And he refused?

Mor. Why not? Of what benefit are blessings? Where all is evil, why torment conscience concerning the mode?

Len. He is a monster.

Mor. But, sir, appearances—

Len. Damn appearances.

Mor. Friends—

Len. Damn his friends.

Mor. A wife—

Len. Damn his wife! He has friends, appearances, and a wife; but he has no heart!

Enter DONALD, in great Agitation.

Don. She is gone! She is lost for aye, I'ze e'en red wude.

Mor. [*Aside to DONALD.*] How now? Herald of malice and mischief!

Don. I canna forget her! Fair fa'yeer hairt, I'ze ne'er set eyes o'her mair.

Mor. Peace, hound!

Don. I tell you I wunna! Misca' me an ye wull, the de'el ma' care, a father turn his back o' his bairn.

Len. Oh, oh! What it was yourself, your own daughter, you were talking of?

Don. Gin earth haud her, I'ze gar ye do her recht. [*Returns.*] She laft a massige for ye.

Mor. [*Anxiously.*] What message?

Don. Tell him, gin he wunna gi his child ane kess, ane scrimpet blessing, that child wull wark, stairve, and die, ere she wull leve like a parish-pauper on scraps and alms. Tell him, she has a pridefoo' spirit, that wunna bag, gin she canna win: and, gif he scorn his dochtor, she scorns aksapt his chairity. [*Going.*

Len. So you commit a crime, and then invent a system for its justification? Excellent philosopher!

Don. [*Returning.*] Why dunna ye spier a'ter her yeersal? Hech! Waesucks! Ye dunna ken yeer ain bairn.

Len. How?

Don. Ye never saw the face o'her, sin she hung a wee giglet at the breast! Weel, weel, nothing comes

more surely tul licht than that which is long hidden.
An ill life, an ill end. [Exit.

Mor. Wolves, tigers, serpents, were first created,
and then man!

Len. You are truly a high fellow, Mordent: you
spend your fortune, wrong your wife, and disown
your child! That is, you inflict misery, and then tell
us all you are miserable!

Mor. I act and am acted upon. The precept and
the proof go together.

Len. You are incorrigible! But come; we must
about this business. My heart is deeply interested.

Mor. My affairs are at a crisis; and, if I augur
rightly, it will soon be all over with me.

Len. Hope better—Come, come with me to En-
field's.

Mor. I'll meet you there in half an hour.

Len. Do not fail—I am all impatience. [Exit.

Mor. Just so are curs fighting, and thieves in the
act of plundering. Man is ever eager on mischief!—
With what infernal ardour do two armies prepare in
the morning, to exterminate each other before noon!
Are they not wise? What is it but compressing the
sum of evil within an hour, which trembling cowardice
would protract through an age? [Exit.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The House of MORDENT.

CHEVERIL and GRIME.

Chev. You must let me have the cash directly.*Grime.* That is impossible.*Chev.* I say, you must—When I have wants and wishes, nothing shall be impossible.*Grime.* [*Aside.*] What if I were to tell him of Joanna? he would pay well.*Chev.* Twelve hours I have been free, and have not had a taste of pleasure yet!—If I do not make haste, I shall grow old before I begin!*Grime.* [*Aside.*] I should make him my friend—
'Tis a rare thought!*Chev.* Why do you ruminate? Do you doubt me?*Grime.* Mr. Cheveril!*Chev.* Well, sir?*Grime.* Do you love innocence, youth, and beauty?*Chev.* Do I? 'Sdeath, I am dying for them.*Grime.* I know where they are to be found.*Chev.* You?*Grime.* The rarest creature!*Chev.* Where, where?*Grime.* Such pure white and red!*Chev.* Ay!*Grime.* Such moist, ripe, ruddy lips!

Chev. 'Sdeath, don't drive me mad ! Tell me where ; where ?

Grime. At a certain convenient——where you may have as many——

Chev. [*Disgust.*] Indeed ? No, no ; I have no taste for beauties of this kind.

Grime. See her, and then judge.

Chev. [*Aside.*] Beside, I'll not be unfaithful to my angelic incognita of the Green Park !

Grime. She is a young, untutored, thing.

Chev. Untutored ?

Grime. [*Significantly.*] That I can assure you.

Chev. Then, depend upon it, I'll not be her instructor. How came she in such a place ?

Grime. She knows nothing of the place, nor in the least suspects she is in bad company.

Chev. Poor dear soul ! what rascal sent her there ?

Grime. Hem ! why, that is, it it it was a kind of accident.

Chev. She is not for me. I want to be a famous wicked fellow, but not by ensnaring the helpless. No, damme, that is not the true way !

Grime. Nay, if you will neither ensnare, nor accept the already ensnared, you must e'en marry, or starve.

Chev. That is damned hard.

Grime. Ensnared she will be.

Chev. Curse me, but she shall not !

Grime. What will you do ?

Chev. Snatch her from danger ; provide for her, cherish her.

Grime. Ay, now you say something.

Chev. Zounds ! here have I been an age in the possession of eight thousand a year, and have not done one famous, good wicked thing yet !—It's a damned shame !

Grime. You will fall in love with her, the moment you see her.

Chev. To be sure I shall.

Grime. 'Tis in Dover Street. I'll furnish you with an introduction.

Chev. You are abundantly civil. An introduction from a usurer, to a——Hem! I shall come to preferment!

Grime. This is the address. [Gives a Card.

Chev. Dover Street.

Grime. Yes—Mrs. Enfield.

Chev. [Reads.] Number—— [Recollects.] 'Sblood! why do I stand prating here? Another day will be over, and I shall not get a taste! [Going.

Grime. Nay, I am telling you of a banquet.

Chev. Are you? Why, then, I have a keen appetite, and a most devouring wish to fall to; so here goes! [Exit, running.

Enter MORDENT.

Mor. So, Mr. Grime.

Grime. Every thing is prepared, sir; We wait your good leisure.

Mor. You will find Mr. Item in his own room.

Grime. I shall attend you there; we can do no business till you come. [Exit.

Mor. Heigho!

Enter CLEMENT.

Clem. My uncle desires me to inform you, sir, that he has examined the deed, and it is ready for signing.

Mor. I am coming.

Clem. Had I but any influence with you, sir, I would entreat, I would conjure you, not to execute it.

Mor. Why?

Clem. A sudden demand may be made by the first mortgagee; you may be unprovided for payment; equity of redemption will be forfeited; he will foreclose, and the estate will be his at a valua-

tion made fifty years ago, less than half its present worth.

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! 'Twill become his incumbrance, as it has been mine.

Clem. Money lenders neglect no advantage.

Mor. And as for conscience or honour—

Clem. Some of them I am afraid, sir, have very little of either.

Mor. 'Tis in the order of things. Your uncle, indeed, is a man of integrity; he knows them to be rogues, and warns me of them.

Clem. Sir, he—I—He may be a mistaken man, like others. I once again conjure you, sir, to reconsider the consequence. It is a very serious affair.—

Mor. Mr. Clement, you are young: You cherish the fond hope of alleviating misery! Ah!

Clem. Sir, I—My situation is a painful one, but every feeling of honesty and duty compel me to inform you, that, when once you have signed this, you will be wholly in the grasp of mercenary men, who will pay no respect to former profits, the benefits they have received, or the feelings and distresses of him, by whom they have acquired wealth, power, and pride. [Exit.

Mor. The nephew and the uncle, poor fools, have the misfortune to be honest. Grime, sly villain, is more cunning, and will not forfeit his hope of cutting evil short at the gallows. The deed must be signed, for the money must be had. Yet these cautionings do but strengthen an aversion, which, in spite of necessity, I have always felt against this last act of despair.

Enter ITEM.

Mr. Item, you are right; this mortgage is a damned affair. Delay is dangerous; thought is vain; yet I am inclined to think again, before I sign.

Item. By all means, sir ; I like that ! I approve that ; act with your eyes open ! take no rash step ; 'tis what I always say—but mine is a thankless office. Like other officious fools, I can give counsel, but no help. I am sorry to tell you, here is the upholsterer below, who is very insolent, and declares, if he be not paid immediately, he will have an execution in the house before night.

Mor. Scoundrel :—Could not you put him off for a week ?

Item. He has been put off too often.

Mor. Are there no means by which you might advance me that sum yourself ?

Item. Oh, that I could ! it would make me the happiest man on earth !

Mor. Affectionate soul !

Item. Riches would now indeed be welcome ;

Mor. [*Sensibility.*] Mr. Item, you make me as great a fool as yourself.

Item. As to the deed, again and again I warn you not to sign it.

Mor. Then I will not. Ruin and wretchedness are certain ; but the mode of being wretched is in my own choice, and I will not.

Item. Yet what the devil I shall say to all your other tradesmen I don't know, they are every man of them as clamorous as the upholsterer. I don't believe one of them will wait two days.

Mor. Was ever man so pestered ?

Item. Here too is a long account, that I have just received from your groom at Newmarket ; who says he shall soon want even a wisp of hay. For my part, I have not a guinea in hand ! I wish I had ! then the impatience of Cheveril ? And what the malignant damned world will say of the defalcation of a guardian, there is no foreseeing—Sign you must not !

Mor. At least I will take an hour or two to think of it. Misfortune, disgrace, and approaching infamy

sit mocking at me, and I shall soon attain the acmé of misery. [Exit.

Item. [Sneer.] Ha! ha! ha! You won't sign? Indeed, moody master of mine! Ha? But I will send those about your ears that will presently make you!

[Exit.

SCENE II.

The Street.

Enter CHEVERIL.

Chev. This is the street. It must be somewhere hereabout. What a fatiguing affair pleasure-hunting is! Oh that I could once more meet my lovely angel, my Green Park deity! [*Examines his Card.*] This is the number.

Enter LENNOX, from MRS. ENFIELD'S Door.

Chev. Heyday! Lennox?

Len. Cheveril?

Chev. Coming from——You, who preach refinement of pursuit, and delicacy of enjoyment?

Len. Oh, we preach one thing, we practise another. Besides, were you but to see her!

Chev. Her!—Who?

Len. The girl I told you of—The divinest creature—

Chev. What, here?

Len. I am all flame!

Chev. In this house?

Len. Yes; but she shall not remain there half an

hour. I am going to prepare every thing. I am determined to secure her.

Chev. [*Aside.*] Honest Grime has given him an introduction too.

Len. Hush! [*JOANNA throws up the Sash, and appears for a Moment at the Window.*] There she is!

[*Points.*

Chev. Where? I see nobody.

Len. Ah, she's gone again.

Chev. Oh, but I'll—— [*Preparing for a run.*

Len. [*Seizing his Arm.*] Where are you going?

Chev. To leap through the window!

Len. No, Cheveril, that must not be.

Chev. Why not?

Len. She is mine.

Chev. Yours?

Len. I have bought an exclusive right to her: paid a hundred pounds down.

Chev. Pooh!

Len. I tell you, she is, and shall be, mine.

Chev. Well, well, if so—— [*Going.*

Len. [*Preventing him.*] Come with me!

Chev. No, I can't.

Len. Why not?

Chev. This is my way.

Len. Nay, but—

Chev. Good b'ye! [*Exit, running.*

Len. Zounds, my damned blabbing tongue! [*Looking after him.*] There he flies, the whirligig! Ah! he is out of sight, and all is safe. I must have Mordent's assistance. Where the devil does he loiter? [*Looks wistfully at the Window.*] I'll soon be back though, for fear of accidents. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

*The House of MRS. ENFIELD.**Enter MRS. ENFIELD.**Mrs. E. [Calling.] Betty!**Betty. [Without.] Ma'am.**Mrs. E.* Who is it, that bounced through the back door in such haste?*Enter BETTY.**Betty.* I don't know, ma'am : a young—Hem !*[Exit.]**Enter CHEVERIL.**Chev.* I am here, safe ; I have tricked him. Your humble servant, madam. Your name is——*Mrs. E.* Mrs. Enfield, at your service, sir.*Chev.* You keep a——modish magazine, I think !*Mrs. E.* Magazine !*Chev.* Of ready made beauty !*Mrs. E.* Well, sir?*Chev.* Your acquaintance, honest Mr. Grime, informed me you have a sample of a fine sort.*Mrs. E.* Ah, you are too late !*Chev.* My friend Lennox has paid you one hundred pounds. Don't stare ; I know the whole. Bring me to the lady, and, if I like her——*Mrs. E.* I am very sorry, sir, but I cannot ; my honour won't let me.*Chev.* Prodigious virtue ! Come, come, Lennox is cunning forty. I have eight thousand a year, and am determined to be a—a—a—wicked dog. So see her I must. This is my proof. *[Showing a Bank Bill.]*

Mrs. E. As Mr. Lennox is your friend, perhaps you have his permission ?

Chev. Permission ; Oh, yes—No ! I'll be wicked but not unprincipled ; I won't lie ! That is a paltry scoundrel vice : no soul in it. Look you, if that sum will not content you, tell me what will ?

Mrs. E. Why sir, you are such a handsome, charming, pleasant, young gentleman, that—if you could spare me another such—

Chev. To settle accounts with your honour. Well, there.

Mrs. E. Observe, sir—it is only a short conversation.

Chev. Nothing more.

Mrs. E. No injury to Mr. Lennox ?

Chev. Never fear.

Mrs. E. But you must be wary ; young as she is, I never saw so cute a one !

Chev. Never fear, I tell you, I understand such affairs ; or soon shall do at least. —Don't imagine I'm one of your sheepfaced fellows—I don't fear any woman, except her in the Green Park. [*Exit MRS. ENFIELD.*] Now if she be worth carrying off, and I could outwit Lennox—I ! Oh ! I should establish my character, for spirit, soul, and intrepidity for ever ! I'll not be out of countenance. No, damme, I am determined, I'll—I'll speak, and to the purpose too, I'll be a damned, forward, prating, impudent, wicked dog !

Enter MRS. ENFIELD, leading JOANNA, who follows reluctantly ; CHEVERIL turns his Back, and tries to assume Courage.

Joanna. Really, madam—

Mrs. E. Ah, my lamb, pray oblige me ; he is one of my kindest, best friends.

Joanna. What then ?

Mrs. E. You are so sweet a cherub, I must procure my friends the pleasure of your acquaintance. Ah, there's a dove! there's a beauty!—Dear, I forgot my knotting, I will be back in a moment.

[*Exit.*

Chev. [*Not daring to look at JOANNA, calls.*] *Mrs. Enfield*—She is gone?—I should have felt boldness, had she been present.

Joanna. It is very strange!

Chev. What does she say?

Joanna. First one man, and then another?

Chev. [*Listening.*] Hay—Hem.

Joanna. Her friends too, are all men!

Chev. Where the devil now is all my impudence flown?

Joanna. But she is so kind, so winning, that I have not the power to deny.

Chev. If I could but turn round—One plunge, and it would be over. [*Turns by degrees.*] Ma—Heavens!—

[*Stands astonished.*

Joanna. [*Aside.*] Mercy! It is he!

Chev. [*Aside.*] The very beauty of the Green Park!

Joanna. [*Sighs.*] I had almost hoped never to have seen him more!

Chev. [*Aside.*] This is the luckiest—Lucky? To find her here?

Joanna. [*Aside.*] I have thought of him much too often!

Chev. [*Aside.*] A creature so divine: Looks of such conscious modesty, and in this place?

Joanna. Sir—

Chev. Madam—[*Aside.*] O that I might but touch her lips!

Joanna. Mrs. Enfield informs me you are one of her best friends.

Chev. Me, madam?

Joanna. Yes, sir.

Chev. Why—that is—[*Aside.*] No, I'll not deceive her.—[*Aloud.*] I never saw Mrs. Enfield before in my life.

Joanna. Never—

Chev. Never. And I don't care if I never see her again.

Joanna. Bless me!

Chev. Very true, madam.—And I—

Joanna. [*Calling.*] Mrs. Enfield!

Chev. Stop, madam.—Pardon my presumption, but—I—you—you have so much beauty and modesty—and merit—and—I am such a faltering—bashful booby—that if you leave me—I shall run mad!

Joanna. Mad, sir?

Chev. Upon my soul I shall, madam, I can't help it; I never was so enchanted, enraptured, and ravished in all my life! And I am very sorry to find you—

Joanna. Sorry to find me?

Chev. No, no, no, madam; glad to find you, infinitely glad; but not in this house.

Joanna. And why, sir?

Chev. I was frantic to think I had lost you?

Joanna. How, so, sir? We are not acquainted.

Chev. I am sorry for it, madam!—B—b—but I hope we shall be. I have been a very bedlamite, I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep,—I have dreamed of you every night, you have been in my head, in my heart, in my arms—

Joanna. Your arms, sir?

Chev. Oh lord, no, madam, No, no—I—I—am talking in my sleep now. I mean—That is—I would not offend you, madam, no, not for ten thousand thrones! Though to find you here is the greatest torment—And if you would but leave this wicked place—

Joanna. I do not understand you, sir.

Chev. Forgive me if I appear intruding; indeed

my intention is good ; but how long have you been in this house ?

Joanna. Not four hours.

Chev. And how long acquainted with this woman ?

Joanna. To-day was the first time I ever saw her.

Chev. [*In Raptures.*] She's innocent, she's innocent !

Mor. [*Without.*] I tell you, I will see her !

Chev. [*Alarmed.*] 'Sdeath, I hear my guardian !

Mor. Lennox will be here presently.

Chev. [*Looking round.*] I must not be seen ; but, for Heaven's sake, let me speak to you once more.

[*Retires into a Closet, from which he occasionally looks.*]

Enter MORDENT.

Mor. [*Surveys JOANNA.*] Your humble servant, madam. [*Aside.*] She is indeed beautiful !

Joanna. [*Aside.*] This is the man of the portrait.

Mor. You are acquainted, I believe, with my friend Mr. Lennox.

Joanna. I, sir ? not to my knowledge.

Mor. Did he not converse with you this morning ?

Joanna. I have conversed with two gentlemen this morning ; you are the third.

Mor. [*Aside.*] Lovely creature ! Can she too be an instrument of malevolence ? [*Aloud.*] I mean a fair gentleman, about forty.

Joanna. Well, sir ; what of him ?

Mor. Did he—not make proposals ?

Joanna. To me ? Proposals ?

Mor. Ay, madam ; on the common subject, the promoting of ill ?

Joanna. You speak riddles. He talked idly, and perhaps was more unprincipled and insulting than I supposed.

Mor. [*Aside.*] By Heavens, she is an innocent ! Nay,

her countenance would half persuade me there are beings capable of happiness.

Chev. [*From the Closet.*] Zounds, he looks as if he too would fall in love with her?

Mor. Pardon my intrusion, madam, I am a stranger to you, but—

Joanna. Not entirely.

Mor. Not?

Joanna. I have been studying you all the morning.

Mor. Me?—You never saw me before.

Joanna. Yes, I have.

Mor. When? Where?

Joanna. [*Pointing to the Picture.*] Here in effigy.

Chev. What are they about?

Mor. My portrait? [*Aside.*] How dare the old beldam hang it up in her house?

Joanna. It speaks volumes: yet not so much as the original.

Chev. What does he say?

Mor. Indeed, and what does it say, madam? if it speak good, it lies.

Joanna. Either it indicates falsely; or you have flattered, promised, deceived, and betrayed.

Mor. [*Aside.*] Astonishing!—Who?

Joanna. More poor girls than one!

Mor. [*Aside.*] Her eyes penetrate to the heart!—
[*Aloud.*] You judge and speak freely, madam. I applaud your sincerity.

Joanna. What should I fear? Beside, you have not the features of revenge.

Mor. [*Aside.*] Her understanding and discernment surpass her beauty.

Chev. Will they never have done?

Joanna. This eye! How often must it have assumed the same deceiving form and meaning, to have impressed these deep lines of artful seduction! How

frequently must health, wealth, and principle, have been sacrificed, to gratify dishonest passions !

Mor. [*Aside.*] Amazing, so young too !

Joanna. You are an unhappy man ; for you have not the apathy of folly ; you have a sense, a feeling, of what you have done.

Mor. I have never had faith in sorcery ! Is it your profession ?

Joanna. I have no profession. I am nobody : the child of nobody : a branch lopped off, and cast away, that might have grown, but that could find no root. Misfortune and an active spirit, struggling to shake off oppression, have quickened me a little. Other than this, I am but a simple girl ; and my whole heart is to note what I see, and to speak what I think.

Mor. Whoever you are, come but with me, and, while I have a morsel, a home, or a heart, you shall share them.

Chev. [*Runs forward.*] Damme if she shall !

Mor. Why, Mr.—— !

Chev. She shall have my morsel, my home, and my heart !

Mor. You in this house, sir ?

Chev. Nay, sir, you in this house, sir ? Madam, put no faith in him. You are very right ; he is a seducer ! I love you, heart, body, and soul ! I'll offer you no wrong. Every proof that the most ardent, purest passion can give, feel, or imagine, shall be yours !

Joanna. This house ! this house ! What is it you mean, gentlemen ? Is there contamination in this house ?

Chev. Vile ! detestable ! a place of intrigue !

Joanna. Heavens !

[*Exit, precipitately.*]

Mor. [*Prevents CHEVERIL from passing.*] How came I, sir, to find you here ?

Chev. Zounds, sir, how came I to find you here ?

Enter MRS. ENFIELD.

Mrs. E. What have you done, gentlemen, to alarm the young creature in this manner? A little more, and she had escaped us all.

Mor. Hark you, Mrs. Enfield, at your peril, keep her safe and free from insult till my return. [*Exit.*

Chev. Insult! If you breathe impurity in her presence, I'll make a general massacre. Let any one take her away, speak to her, or even look at her, while I am gone, and I'll grind you all to powder! [*Goes, and hastily returns.*] Here—here are all the bills I have. I'll be back in five minutes; keep her safe, and I'll give you a thousand pounds! My name is Cheveril: ten thousand! [*Returns.*] Cheveril, I say: my whole estate! [*Exit.*

Mrs. E. But, sir! sir! [*Exit.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The House of MORDENT.

ITEM enraged, and GRIME determined.

Grime. Once for all, Mr. Item, it will not do. So be of a sweet temper.

Item. Why, you grumbling old blockhead, what would you have? May you not thank me for every shilling you are worth in the world?

Grime. Don't tell me, Mr. Item! I am but your scavenger, and you put me to a deal of dirty work.

Item. Here's gratitude! Why, Mr. Grime!

Grime. Well, Mr. Item!

Item. Did I not first find you in a miserable garret, in Fullwood's Rents, where you were starving in rags and wretchedness?

Grime. Well!

Item. Did I not take you to Monmouth Street, make you cast your beggar's skin, transform you into something almost human, hire you apartments in the Temple, and pass you on my master for a rich usurer, a damned rogue?

Grime. Very true; but you would not let me act my part. You took care to be the damned rogue yourself.

Item. Have I not trusted you, tutored you, taught you your trade, and furnished the tools?

Grime. What then?

Item. And do you pretend to bargain, wrangle, and prescribe terms to me?

Grime. Yes, I do.

Item. You do?

Grime. I do. Help yourself how you can.

Item. Here's a villain!

Grime. You tutored me, you know; you taught me my trade, and furnished the tools.

Item. You viper! Sting the bosom that fostered you?

Grime. I follow your own example; Mr. Mordent fostered you! There's morality in it.

Item. Oh, damn your morality!

Grime. Be of a sweet temper. Time was, I was your slave; you are now mine.

Item. Oh, the rascal!

Grime. I am too deep in your secrets for you to dare discard me; so, I'll have my share.

Item. Your——

Grime. Ay, my—my full share—so be sweet tempered.

Item. And who is to find the money?

Grime. You.

Item. And who is to run the risk?

Grime. You.

Item. And who is to be prosecuted for usury and collusion?

Grime. Cast perhaps for perjury, whipped, imprisoned, and put in the pillory—You.

Item. And you to run away with half the profits?

Grime. Yes.

Item. Here's justice! Oh, what a damned world do we live in!

Grime. Your fortune is made; you must now help to make mine.

Enter DONALD, unperceived.

Item. Here's a villain!

Grime. You must, or I tell.

Item. What will you tell?

Grime. All!—All the usurious tricks you have practised on Mordent; the arts by which you have cheated him of his estates, pretending that I am the man; your intention to foreclose; your neglect in not paying yourself interest, purposely to rob according to law; your plots to ruin Cheveril; all, all!

Item. You will tell all this?

Grime. I will.

Item. Why, you fiend! You superlative villain! you cut-throat!

Grime. [*Seeing DONALD.*] Hem! [*Pause.*

Don. What the hornie de'el do ye stop at? What gars ye swither? I'ze haud my whisht! Yeer confabulation is unco entertaining!

Item. Ah, good Mr. Donald! Here is my old friend, Mr. Grime, has, has—[*Aside to GRIME.*] You see what your villany has done!—[*Aloud.*] He is a

goodnatured soul, as you know.—[*Aside.*] Scoundrel!—and he—I—I—

Don. Ye!—Yas; ye'er a sweet nut, gin ye war well crackt.

Item. I, I, I was bantering him: trying, to—[*Aside.*] Villain!—but nothing can put him in a passion!—[*Aside.*] Oh, curse you!—Nothing!

Don. The fient! Wow, but ye'er a pauky Gilligapus!

Item. Perhaps you want our good master, Mr. Donald?

Don. Aiblins yeer right, auld Clootie.

Item. He is gone out. Nothing but a joke, Mr. Donald: nothing else.

Don. [*Clenching his Fist.*] Noo could I gi' him sic ana gowf o' the haffet!

Item. Can I, can my dear friend, Mr. Grime—[*Aside.*] Oh, you thief!—do you any service?

Don. Haud yeer blether, mon!

Item. Can we oblige you any way in the world?

Don. Yas.

Item. [*Fawning.*] How? How?

Don. Tak compaission o' the booels o' yeer brither, Jack Ketch, and be yeer ain hangman! [*Exit.*

Item. There, villain! You see what you have done!

Grime. Is it my fault? I tell you again, you had better be sweet tempered. I shall say no more: you know my mind. [*Going.*

Item. [*Aside.*] Oh, that I could poison him!—[*Aloud.*] Mr. Grime! Mr. Grime!

Grime. Well, Mr. Item?

Item. This quarrelling is very foolish.

Grime. Oh, ho!

Item. We are necessary to each other.

Grime. I know it.

Item. Your hand?

Grime. There.

Item. We are friends?

Grime. If you please.

Item. Well, well—[*Aside.*] Damn him! How I hate the dog!—Concerning this Berkshire mortgage—

Grime. Ay?

Item. You shall have twenty per cent. on the premium.

Grime. That won't do!

Item. Thirty!

Grime. It won't do! Half—the full half!

Item. [*Aside.*] Hell take him!—Well, well, my dear Grime, the half be it.

Grime. Together with my moiety of the thousand, given with Joanna.

Item. Your—Hem! [*Sighs.*] You shall; you shall. Are you satisfied?

Grime. On these conditions.

Item. Where is the deed?

Grime. In that bag.

Item. Mordent is coming. I know he will, for I know he shall, sign. But that is not all.

Grime. What more?

Item. This damned Scotchman will assuredly betray us to him; and Lady Anne's jointure prevents his being so entirely destitute, and powerless, as is necessary.

Grime. But how is that to be helped?

Item. Easily enough. You must convey information, to her father and relations, that he has a daughter.

Grime. Nay, but—

Item. Hush! here he comes! I will give you my reasons and instructions when we are alone. Where is the deed?

Grime. Here, ready. Hem!

Enter MR. MORDENT.

Mor. [*Anger.*] What is the meaning, Mr. Item, that I see that upholsterer, and two other ill looking followers with him, below?

Item. Nay, why ask me? Why knit your brows at me? Can I coin?

Mor. Excuse me; I am a hunted bull, and butt at friends and foes!

Item. The insolent fellow insisted on taking possession; so, thinking you would not wish Lady Anne to know, I prevailed on him and the officer to remain in the hall, till I could speak to you. If I have done amiss, show me in what.

Mor. No, no; I know your zeal. Why will you not advance two thousand pounds, for that and other immediate purposes, and delay signing, Mr. Grime? I ask only a day.

Item. Ay, Mr. Grime, why will you not?

Grime. [*With great Gravity.*] Impossible!

Item. Don't tell me! Impossible, indeed! You ought to consent; it is your duty: nay, you shall consent!

Grime. I cannot. Must have security.

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! Villain!—Where is the deed?

Item. So you will not, Mr. Grime? you will not?

Grime. I wish I could; but I am myself a borrower: the money is not my own.

Item. Hem!

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! Damn your rascal hypocrisy! Give me the pen.

Item. [*Holding his Arm.*] Why, you will not sign, sir! Will you?

Mor. Peace, fool! Cannot you see a wretch on the wheel, but that your bones too must ache?

Item. [*Quitting him: he signs.*] Ah! It is always thus! I may advise, but my advice is never followed.

Mor. [*Seals.*] "I deliver this as my act and deed."

Here, implement of hell ! I know your thirst, blood-hound ! 'Tis ready mixed destruction : take, quaff, and burst ! Begone !

Item. [*Seizing the Deed.*] Come, sir ! My good master has sufficient reason to be angry with you ; it was very unfriendly, sir, to refuse. You teach Mr. Mordent what he has to expect.—[*Aside.*] All is now secure !
[*Exeunt ITEM and GRIME.*

Enter DONALD, looking earnestly after them.

Don. Ha' ye signed ?—Ha' ye signed ?

Mor. Ask no questions—Yes.

Don. Weel, weel !—Stark deed has nae remeed !—Twa wolves may worry ane sheep—I kam to tell ye, that yeer glib gabbit steward, and his compeer, Grime, are twa scoondrels.

Mor. Pshaw, fool !

Don. I tal ye, they are twa damned villains !

Mor. Grime, fellow ! Grime ! A paltry, gold-loving, ravenous rascal ! But Item ?—a worthy man !

Don. He wordy ? That fient ? Marcy o' my soul ! He is the prime cock deel o' the blackest pit o' hell ! The malison curse catch 'em aw ! 'Tis nae stick and stow sax minutes sin I heard aw their murgullied gab !

Mor. Hear ?

Don. Yas, hear !

Mor. What did you hear ?

Don. Item himsal confess that he had flethered ye of awe yeer estates ; that Grime is nae mair but his flunkie ; that it is his intantion to foreclose ; that he has wilfully neglacted to pay himsal interest, for that he may claw ye according tul law ; that there ha' been sham deeds ; and that a plot is laid to felch Maister Cheveril of awe his walth.

Mor. [*Convulsive Laughter.*] Ha ! ha ! ha ! You heard all this ?

Don. Wi' my ain ears !

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! Item? Are you sure you heard this precious mischief?

Don. When did Donald tall ye a lie?

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! Item? I am glad on't! 'Tis right! 'Tis consistent! 'Tis delightful! Ha! ha! ha! Abraham's rejected prayer: not one honest man! Ha! ha! ha!

Don. Hoot awa! Nae onest? Nor ye, nor the black clawed Lucifer himsal, canna deny but that Donald is onest.

Mor. Item? Ha! ha! ha! Inestimable villain!—And I too? Thought him just and good! Oh, gull! gull! gull! gull! Ha! ha! ha! [*Recollecting.*] Tell Mr. Clement I wish to speak with him.

Don. Noo the steed is stolen, ye wad steck the door. [*Exit.*]

Mor. [*Convulsed Anguish.*] Oh the sharp fanged wolf! Ha! ha! ha!

Enter LENNOX.

Len. Mordent! How now? How you look!

Mor. I am an ass—a most ineffable ass!

Len. What is the matter?

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! 'Tis proved upon me!

Len. Your mirth is of a strange kind!

Mor. The man whom I have trusted through life, ha! ha! ha! he whose rigid honesty—do you mark me? ha! ha! ha! honesty!

Len. Well?

Mor. Ha! ha! ha! whose honesty made me sometimes doubt the truth of the self evident system of evil, ha! ha! ha! he's a rascal! A double leagued hell dog!

Len. Your steward?

Mor. Item! A deep, damnable, thorough paced, villain; that can bully, cajole, and curse; fawn, flatter, and filch, ha! ha! ha!

Len. Be patient.

Mor. Oh, I am delighted, ha! ha! ha!

Len. Be calm. You knew yourself to be in the power of a villain, and 'tis little matter whether his name be Grime or Item.

Mor. How? Ha! ha! ha! In a world of rascality, are not two rascals better than one?

Len. Nay, but attend to me. I want your help instantly in Dover Street.

Mor. [*Pause.*] Dover Street?

Len. Yes.

Mor. [*Recollecting.*] It must not be.

Len. Ahey! What's the freak now?

Mor. [*Wildly.*] You can have no help of mine.

Len. [*Angry.*] Indeed, but I must!

Mor. [*Earnest Rapidity.*] I would not commit an injury on that girl for worlds.

Len. [*Anger increasing.*] Why, what conscientious mummary is this? You neglect your own child, and pretend to interest yourself for a stranger!

Mor. If the stranger be an angel of light, a beneficent being, why not?

Len. Beneficent! What, in this system of evil?

Mor. An exception to the rule! a rare exception!

Len. Like Item?

Mor. Pshaw! Hell!

Len. And may not your deserted daughter be equally an angel?

Mor. [*Wild Terror.*] May she? If she should—I'll have no concern in the ruin of that girl!

Len. [*Confirmed Suspicion and Anger.*] Hark you, Mordent, you are plotting.

Mor. I?

Len. No distress can cure you of your old propensities. You mean to trick me of her.

Mor. Ha! ha!

Len. 'Tis evident. Do you not affirm she cannot

remain innocent, in the house into which she is decoyed?

Mor. [*Cooling yet perturbed.*] Granted.

Len. Marriage excepted, which would be madness, am I a man to treat her vilely?

Mor. Not worse than the malignity of fate ordains.

Len. If you really wish the lovely creature's welfare, would preserve your ward, and prove your friendship and honest intentions, you will aid me.

Mor. Well, well, I am blind; I am but the tool of destiny; so be it.

Len. Your authority will oblige Mrs. Enfield to yield her to me.

Mor. No; my credit there is on the decline. Stratagem; stratagem.

Len. But how? What?

Mor. Convey a disguise to the girl.

Len. And so she will escape us all.

Mor. Escape? No, no! Malevolence is the element of man, and I have an apt alacrity: I will instruct you. Come this way. Having her safe, you may post away with her to my commodious house in Park Lane. Fear not me! When Belial is busy, shall his progeny be idle?

Enter DONALD.

Don. Maister Clement is nae i'the hoose.

Len. Come, come!

Mor. Oh! What an excellent gull is this image of the gods, this thing called man!

[*Exeunt MORDENT and LENNOX.*]

Don. Ah! Wacs me! This poor lassie? I canna rest! I hirple here and gang hilching there, till I'ze e'en ramfeezled wi' the ripples. I wist nae where tul spier niest. My dool and thole wull be my deeth! I'Gode's name, and wi' aw my hairt; for I'ze recht weary o'life!

Enter CHEVERIL in great Haste, searching.

Don. Hoot mon ! What is the bang ?

Chev. My dear Donald, can you direct me where Mr. Item or Mr. Grime may be found ?

Don. Donald diract ye tul sic an a pair o'scoondrels ? Faither Balzebub ! But I wad at anes gar ye o'er catch plague, pastilence and famine.

Chev. 'Sdeath ! they are both dead and buried, I believe ; for they are neither here, nor there, nor any where else. Can you tell me where I can borrow a few thousands ?

Don. Sir, do you tak me for a thief, or a steward ?

Chev. I shall go mad—Oh, Donald, I left the most angelic girl your eyes ever beheld, at a wicked house ! she must be friendless and fatherless, or she could not have been there.

Don. [*Eagerly.*] What's that ye red of angil and faitherless ?

Chev. I am sure she is innocent. Vile as the house is, she is innocent.

Don. Wha ? What she ? What hoose ?

Chev. I can't stay—I saw her first in the Green Park.

Don. Green Pairk ?

Chev. She is now at Enfield's —A divine girl ! A miracle !

Don. What ? Hoo ?—A menzfoo' maikless lass ? I the bloom o'youdith ?

Chev. Not twenty ; yet with the penetration, wit, and understanding of the seven sages !

Don. [*Agitated.*] The Green Pairk ? Maircy misgi' me ! Enfield's !

Chev. In Dover Street.

Don. I ken the place ! A hoose o'hell—Gin it be—Quick, Donald, quick. [*Exit hastily.*]

Chev. What is the matter with the honest soul ? I don't know what sum that old harridan will require,

but I can do nothing without money. I must have enough too, for I must make sure. I'll place her in safety and splendour: she shall be my queen.

Enter ITEM.

Chev. Ah, my dear, dear Item! I am the luckiest fellow on earth, I am in instant want of money!

Item. So am I. I have been in want of it all my life.

Chev. You must furnish me with ten thousand pounds.

Item. Ah! I wish I could!

Chev. 'Sblood, don't stand wishing, but give me the money.

Item. If my friend Grime were but here—

Chev. 'Sdeath and the devil, give me the money! I shall lose her! She'll be gone? I'll make over the seventeen thousand, that is in Mordent's hands; I will by Heaven! On the word and honour of a gentleman.

Item. The seventeen thousand?

Chev. I will.

Item. It is true, I have cash in hand; but not my own.

Chev. Zounds! Never mind whose it is! Let me have it,

Item. Why, if I could but manage the matter—I am but a poor old man, and it would be a little lift.

Chev. Damn your poverty and your cant.

Item. You are sure you understand—the seventeen thousand?

Chev. I tell you, yes.

Item. The risk will be very great.

Chev. Do you doubt my word?

Item. No, no—But—

Chev. But what?

Item. Your hand-writing, on a stamp, would be a memorandum.

Chev. You shall have it? Write a receipt for seventeen thousand : I'll sign it.

Item. [*Searches, takes out an Account Book, lays it down ; then takes out another Book, finds a Stamp, and writes.*] Ay, this is the thing. You remember the risk ? Otherwise it might be thought—

Chev. Give it me ! Give it me ! I have no time for thinking.

Item. I must borrow, to replace it.

Chev. Will you come away, and let me have the money ? Come, come, man ! 'Sdeath will you despatch ?

Enter CLEMENT.

Clem. Do you know where Mr. Mordent is, sir ?

Item. No, sir ?

[*CHEVERIL hurries ITEM off ; who puts up his Receipt in one Book, but forgets the other, that he laid down on the Table.*

Clem. Mr. Mordent has asked for me, and unfortunately I cannot find him. I fear he has signed the mortgage. Oh this uncle ! Never was situation so excruciating as mine. Must I cast off all ties of blood, become his accuser, and, as the world would call it, betray my benefactor ? Beside, what have I to reveal ? My fears and my suspicions. Unconnected facts, that can alarm, but not relieve. And who is it that I should thus impotently accuse ? My own uncle. [*Sees the Book.*] Ha ! What have we here ? As I live, his private account book ! The very thing he so carefully has concealed from all inspection ! What shall I do ? Deliver it to Mordent ? What may be the consequences ? Disgrace, infamy, and—Dreadful thought !—I must not be rash.—Hark ! He's here—I must consider well. [Exit.

Enter ITEM and CHEVERIL. ITEM with his Hair on End, frightened ; runs up to the Table, looks over it, under it, and every where.

Chev. [Anxious to get him away.] You see, there is no book there.

Item. [With terror.] I am certain I had it in my hand.

Chev. We have not quitted the room a minute! Nobody can have been here since !

Item. We left my nephew here.

Chev. Well, if he have it, 'tis safe enough.

Item. I don't know that ! I don't know that ! If I have lost it, I shall never sleep again.

Chev. Come away ! You have it somewhere, locked up safe.

Item. No ! I laid it down here ; I am positive of it.

Chev. Nay, but, you see that is impossible ! Come, come. *[Taking his Arm.]*

Item. If it be gone, I shall go mad.

Chev. Is it so valuable ?

Item. [Still searching his Pockets, the Table, and the Chamber.] I would not lose it for all I am worth in the world !

Chev. Come, come—*[Elbowing him but not rudely, at first to the Door.]* What did it contain ?

Item. My soul ! My secrets !

Chev. Well, it certainly is not here—You must go—You shall go—I'll indemnify you.

Item. You can't.

Chev. I tell you, I will ! *[Pushing him off.]* It is in your own room.

Item. I hope so ! I hope so. *[Turning back.]* But my heart misgives me—Oh lord ! I'm undone !

Chev. [A push.] Will you go ?

Item. [Turning.] I am wretched.

Chev. [Again push.] You won't.

Item. [Turning.] I'm ruined !

Chev. [Again.] Will you, or—

Item. [Turning.] I'm lost—I'm dead—I'm—

Chev. [Again with more violence.] Furies and fire,
begone. [Exeunt.]

Enter MORDENT.

Mor. [Calls.] Mr. Cheveril ! [Runs over to the Door.]
Mr. Cheveril !—"Tis impossible to stop him ; But no
matter ; the plan cannot fail : Lennox by this time
has her safe. Why ay, I have advised ! I have plot-
ted, I have aided ; and in what ? Why the ruin of
an innocent ; who, while I looked and listened to her,
I would have lost my life to defend !

Enter MRS. SARNET.

Mrs. S. My lady, sir, desires to know if she may
have the honour to see you.

Mor. What is the matter now ?

Mrs. S. Oh, as to that, let my lady speak ! I have
got ill blood enough, because I would not take some-
body's part. But that is all over.

Mor. What is over ?

Mrs. S. I have told my lady, often and often, how
a gentleman's proud spirit might be brought down ;
but she would never listen to my consultation before.

Mor. Before ?

Mrs. S. For, said I, my lady, you would be as
merry as May, if you would but pluck up a spirit to
take the Earl's advice, and leave all base seducers to
their own course.

Mor. You said so ?

Mrs. S. Yes, I did ! I should be no woman, if I
would not take part with my sect ! So we are all
ready for moving ; seeing as we are resolved. For,
said I, if he should fall at my feet, and cry his eyes
out, I would not hear a word.

Mor. Indeed !

Mrs. S. Not but I have as tender a heart as another. But then, I would sooner break his heart than my own.

Mor. What does this insolent gabble mean?

Mrs. S. Why it means that my lady is coming to take her leave; and then we shall begone; and then it will be seen who will have most cause to repent.

Mor. [*Aside.*] Is it possible?

Mrs. S. I am sure if I could have made folks happy, I would have done it with all my heart and soul! But the secret is out at last, and all is settled. Not but, for all I'm so glad, I can't say but I'm sorry in the main! for I'm sure some folks will be miserable enough! and, though they richly deserve it, one can't help feeling for them, in one's heart. And so, sir, as perhaps I shall never see you no more, God bless you!

Enter LADY ANNE.

Lady A. Mr. Mordent, I am driven upon an agonizing task, which a too painful sense of duty only could oblige me to execute.

Mor. Proceed, madam; apologies for feeling or for inflicting pain are quite unnecessary.

Lady A. Forgive me! Would it were to be avoided! — You have a daughter?

Mor. Whence gain you that intelligence.

Lady A. From the Earl of Oldcrest.

Mor. And what is his authority?

Lady A. I know not. But I, it seems, have innocently been the cause, that she is disowned and abandoned. Of such an act I cannot knowingly consent to be a moment guilty. The fatal period is come! that separation, which I so much have dreaded, is inevitable.

Mor. And you support your fate with patience.

Lady A. Cruel man! do I deserve this parting reproach?

Mor. You deserve? Who shall dare insinuate it?

Lady A. Happy days and past endearments rush upon my mind with sensations unutterable?

Mor. I know! I know—I am the vilest of men.

Lady A. Far from saying, far from thinking so, I take my full share of blame. How do I know, that the fault is not wholly mine?

Mor. [*Much moved.*] Madam, I—I—I request I may be tortured by any thing but your candour.

Lady A. To despair of recovering those inestimable blessings was quite sufficient! But to be the cause of banishing a child from a father's arms and heart? to cast it an orphan on a tempestuous world? No! whatever my other mistakes may have been, of that no tongue shall accuse me.

Mor. Right! let the guilt be all my own.

Lady A. And now, I have one last request to make; which I conjure you, by all our former affection, not to deny.

Mor. To ask favours, where there is neither the power to grant, nor the desire to be thanked, is fruitless.

Lady A. I am but too well acquainted with the state of your affairs.

Mor. A humane motive for parting!

Lady A. The settlements you made on me, in our early days of love, were ample. In the sincerity of affection, I vowed, if ever they should be necessary to your happiness, that moment they should again be yours.

Mor. [*Greatly agitated.*] Madam?

Lady A. Pardon and endure this proof of my fidelity! The deeds are now in Mr. Clement's possession: he will restore them to you.

Mor. [*Indignantly.*] Never!

Lady A. Stop! Beware of rashness! You are a father, and have a father's sacred duties to fulfil. Take

home your daughter : make her what amends you can for the desertion of a parent's love.

Mor. 'Tis too much ! Scorpions could not sting like this.

Lady A. On this last occasion, suffer a gleam of former kindness once more to warm your bosom. Money is a poor vehicle, for the affections of the soul ? a contemptible token of the love I have borne you ! but, such as it is, for that love's sake, give it welcome. A cold adieu I cannot take, it freezes my very heart. From my soul, I ever loved, and ever shall love ! Had I a heaven of happiness to bestow, would you but deign to accept it from me, it should be yours. [*Exit.*

Mor. Why, so, so, so !—It rages, it bursts, it is complete ! Let fate or fiends increase the misery, if they can.

Enter DONALD.

Don. It's past ! It's aw o'er ! My forebodings are fulfilled.

Mor. [*Alarmed.*] Have you not found her yet ?

Don. Yes, yes, I hae foond her.

Mor. Have you ? Where ?

Don. I'ze noo indeed a rasca' go-between. [*Horror.*] But what are ye ?

Mor. You say, you have found her ?

Don. She is gone ? She is ruined ! Ye're a wratch : the most meeserable o' wratches.

Mor. Tormenting demon ! What ? Who ?—Where have you been ?

Don. To Dover street.

Mor. [*Seized.*] Dover— ?

Don. Tul the elritch limmer Enfield.

Mor. [*With terror.*] What do you say ?

Don. I was too late ! A maister scoondrel, e'en as wecked as her ain father, had decoyed her intul his net.

Mor. [*Phrensy.*] Decoyed?

Don. Lennox! Yeer friend; yeer crony.

Mor. [*Horror.*] From Enfield's.

Don. Ha' not I toud ye?

Mor. Lennox? Dover street? Joanna?

Don. Hear it, gin ye can, and live—Joanna, yeer cheeld! Yeer guileless Joanna.

Mor. [*Distractedly.*] Misery of hell! And was that Joanna? That my child? Celestial creature—And I the pit digger. [*Pause.—Despair.*]

Don. [*Alarmed at the agony of MORDENT.*] Sir!—Sir!—Maister!

Mor. [*Starting.*] I the pander? I cast her shrieking on the bed of infamy, and chain her in the arms of lust? Her father do this? [*Pause of fixed horror.*]

Don. Maister!—Dear Maister!—Maister Mordent! Dear Maister Mordent! Speak! I'ze forgi' ye! Why maister! I'ze pray for ye! I'ze die for ye! I'ze forgi' ye.

Mor. [*Starting from a profound Trance of despondency.*] Fly! Summon the servants! Arm yourselves! follow me to Park lane. [*Exit.*]

Don. [*Confusedly.*] William! Sandy! Jock! [*Exit, calling.*]

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The GREEN PARK, Twilight.

MORDENT and LENNOX.

Mor. We are now in private.

Len. I am glad we are.

Mor. And now, sir, I insist on a clear and explicit answer. Where have you lodged Joanna?

Len. Nay, sir, where have you lodged Joanna?

Mor. Mr. Lennox, I will not be trifled with! where is she?

Len. Nor will I be trifled with, Mr. Mordent: I say, where is she? The contrivance was your own! I know you.

Mor. This will not serve, sir; it is all evasion.

Len. Ay, sir, it is evasion! cunning, base, damned evasion! and I affirm she is in your possession.

Mor. Mr. Lennox, I am at this moment a determined and desperate man, and must be answered—Where is she?

Len. Sir, I am as determined and as desperate as yourself, and I say, where is she? For you alone can tell?

Mor. 'Tis false!

Len. False?

Mor. Ay, false.

Len. [*Going up to him.*] He is the falsest of the false, that dares whisper such a word.

Mor. Hark you, sir, I understand your meaning, and came purposely provided. [*Draws a Pair of Pistols.*] Take your choice. They are loaded.

Len. Oh, with all my heart! [*Presents at some Paces distant.*] Come, sir.

Mor. [*Approaching sternly.*] Nigher.

Len. [*Approaching desperately.*] As nigh as you please.

Mor. [*Short Pause.*] Why don't you fire!

Len. Why do you turn it out of the line?—[*Drops his Arm. Pause.*] I see your intention, Mordent, you are tired of life, and want me to murder you—Damn it, man, that is not treating your friend like a friend.—Kill me if you will, but don't make me your assassin.
[*Pause—both greatly affected.*]

Mor. [*Tenderly.*] Nay, kill me, or tell me where you have lodged the wretched girl.

Len. [*With great energy.*] Fiends seize me, if I have lodged her any where, or know what is become of her!

Mor. Your behaviour tells me you are sincere; and to convince you at once that I am no less so, know, she is my daughter!

Len. [*Seized.*] Your daughter?

Mor. The honest, indefatigable, Donald discovered her at Enfield's.

Len. Murder my friend, and seduce his daughter!

Mor. [*Deeply affected.*] We are sad fellows.—
[*They pause, and gradually recover from the deep passion with which they were mutually seized.*] Again and again, 'tis a vile world.

Len. [*Eagerly.*] I'll seek it through with you, to find her.—Forgive me?

Mor. [*Taking his Hand.*] Would I could forgive myself!

Len. [*With animation.*] But it seems then she has escaped, and is perhaps in safety.

Mor. Oh that she were!—Donald used to meet her here, in the Green Park, about this time of the evening. [*Listens.*] I hear the sound of feet. [*Looks.*] 'Tis not a woman. Let us retire among the trees, and keep on the watch. [*While they are seen retiring,*

Enter CHEVERIL.

Chev. [*Looking round, with great anxiety.*] She is not here! she is gone! for ever gone—gone—gone—gone! I shall never more set eyes on her! I'll fire that infernal Dover Street!—I'll pistol Lennox!—I may perambulate here till doomsday, and to no purpose. She would have been here, had she been free. Aye, aye, she is in thralldom: perhaps in the very gripe of vice?—Furies!—Lennox is a liar!—I'll cut his

throat!—I'll hack him piece-meal?—I'll have her, or I'll have his heart.

Enter JOANNA in men's Clothes.—CHEVERIL seen walking among the Trees.

Joanna. Whither shall I run? Where shall I hide? How fly the pursuits of wicked men, and women still more depraved? I have neither house, home, nor friend on earth; and the fortitude that can patiently endure, is my only resource. What then?—have I not escaped the dens of vice!—Oh happiness!—I have—I have! And rather than venture in them again, welcome hunger, welcome cold, welcome the bare ground, the biting air, and the society of brute beasts!

Chev. [Advancing.] What can that youth want? Why is he watching here? [*Walks round JOANNA.*

Joanna. As I live, the young gentleman I saw this morning! What reason can he have for being in this place?

Chev. He eyes me with curiosity.

Joanna. His intentions seemed good, for he first warned me against that wicked woman.

Chev. Who can say, he may know her? He is a smart, handsome, dapper fellow: I don't like him.

Joanna. I am not now confined by walls and bolts—there can be no danger.—I'll speak.—Pray sir—

Chev. [Abruptly.] Well, sir?

Joanna. Have you seen a young person—

Chev. [Eagerly.] A lady—

Joanna. Yes.

Chev. [Rapidly.] With blue eyes, auburn hair, aquiline nose, ivory teeth, carnation lips, ravishing mouth, enchanting neck, a form divine, and an angel face?

Joanna. Have you seen her?

Chev. Are you acquainted with that lady?

Joanna. I am acquainted with a lady, but not an angel.

Chev. Ah! then 'tis not her. [*Jealous.*] Perhaps you are her—her lover?

Joanna. Humph—I—I love her.

Chev. You do ! [*Aside.*] I'll be the death of him—
And she loves you ?

Joanna. Why—Yes.

Chev. [*Aside.*] I'll put an end to him !—Are you married ?

Joanna. No.

Chev. You—you mean to marry her ?

Joanna. No.

Chev. Is she then lost to virtue ?

Joanna. Who dare suppose it ?

Chev. Ay, who dare ? I'll cut the villain's throat
that dares !

Joanna. She has endured insult, constraint, and
violence ; but not guilt.

Chev. Guilt ? No, not wilful guilt : impossible !
But then—Is she safe ? Is she safe ?

Joanna. Disowned by her family, exposed to the
snares of vice, houseless, hopeless, not daring to ap-
proach the wicked haunts of men, she wanders forlorn
and desolate, willing to suffer, disdaining to com-
plain.

Chev. Tell me where ! I will rescue, defend, pro-
tect, cherish, love, adore, die for her !

Joanna. Is your heart pure ! Have you no selfish,
dishonest, purposes ?

Chev. How came you to imagine, sir, that I or
any man durst couple her and dishonesty, even in a
thought ?

Joanna. Meet me here to-morrow at ten.

Chev. You.

Joanna. You shall see her.

Chev. See her ! shall I ?

Joanna. You shall.

Chev. My dear friend ! [*Catches her in his Arms.*]
I'll make your fortune !—At nine ?

Joanna. Ten.

Chev. Could not I see her to-night ?

Joanna. Tomorrow Joanna will meet you.

Chev. Joanna ? is that her dear name ?

Joanna. It is.

Chev. Delightful sound ! The sweet Joanna ? The divine Joanna ! my heart's best blood is not so precious as Joanna !

Joanna. But, pray where do you live !

Chev. Joanna !—In Portland Place,

Joanna. Your name ?

Chev. Joanna !—Cheveril ; Hans Cheveril.—Joanna !—Be sure you don't forget.

Joanna. I'll be punctual.

[MORDENT appearing among the Trees.

Joanna. Who's here ? [Glides behind.

Chev. Joanna !—At eight ? did not you say ?—Where is he gone ?—Sir ! Sir ! [Runs off, seeking.

Mor. I heard the name repeated ! [Aloud.] Who is it here that knows Joanna ?

Joanna. [Appearing.] I do.

Mor. Sir, do you ? Well, and what ? Where ?—Is she safe ?

Joanna. I hope so.

Mor. But where, sir ? Where ?

Joanna. [Aside.] 'Tis Mr. Mordent ! [Aloud.] Why do you inquire ?

Mor. For Heaven's sake, sir, do not torment me by delay, but tell me where she is.

Joanna. I must not.

Mor. [Seizing her Arm.] But, sir, I say you must and shall !

Joanna. [Firmly.] Sir, you mistake, if you suppose menaces can prevail.

Mor. Excuse me, I would give my right hand to know what it appears you can tell.

Joanna. I can tell nothing, till I am first made acquainted with your true motives.

Mor. And will you inform me then ?

Joanna. Provided I am certain of their purity.

Mor. Know, then, that I pant for a sight of her once more, to do her the little justice that is yet in my power. Know, the wrongs she has received from me are irreparable, vile, such as could not have happened but in this worst of worlds! Know, that I, her natural guardian, have been her actual persecutor; that I drove her to the abode of infamy; that I became the agent of her ruin, the plotter against her chastity; and that, when I had set the engines of darkness and hell at work to ensure her everlasting wretchedness, I then discovered [*With Horror.*] she was my daughter!

Joanna. Sir!—Your daughter!—You? You my father?

Mor. How!

Joanna. [*Falling at his Feet, and snatching his Hand.*] Oh!

Mor. Can it be?—My child?—My Joanna?—
[*Eagerly raising and regarding her again.*] It is! It is!
[*Falling on her Neck.*]

Joanna. My father!

Mor. My child! and innocent?

Joanna. As your own wishes; or the word father should never have escaped my lips. This dress was the disguise conveyed to me, by which I effected my escape. I can suffer any thing but dishonour.

Mor. A father? Oh!—I do not deserve thee! I do not deserve thee! [*Gazing rapturously.*] Once again, let me fold thee to my heart!

Len. [*Without, at a Distance.*] Zounds, sir!

Chev. [*Without.*] I insist, sir.

Joanna. I hear voices. [They retire.]

Enter CHEVERIL and LENNOX.

Chev. Oh, for swords, daggers, pistols!

Mor. [*To JOANNA.*] This way.

[*Exeunt MORDENT and JOANNA.*]

Len. Confound your impertinent freaks; they have stopped my mouth this half hour. I would have told you all I knew instantly, but for your insulting passion.

Chev. Did not you say, you would not tell me where she is?

Len. I said, I could not.

Chev. Why, there now.

Len. But I suspect I can tell more at present, if you will but hear.

Chev. 'Sdeath, then, why don't you?

Len. Will you be silent?—I had a glimpse of Mordent this moment, in conversation with a youth.

Chev. Well?

Len. It was the identical dress I sent as a disguise to Joanna.

Chev. How!

Len. And I suspect that very youth to be Joanna herself.

Chev. [*Recollecting.*] By Heaven, and so it is! [*Anger and Fear.*] In the possession of Mordent?

Len. Be patient—there is a secret.—His claims supersede all others.

Chev. His claims!—By every power of heaven and hell——

Len. [*Catching his Arm.*] Be patient, I tell you;—she is his daughter!

Chev. [*Momentary Pause.*] Joanna? My sweet Joanna his daughter?

Len. Even so.

Chev. His daughter? Hurrah! My dear Lennox! [*Hugs him in his Arms.*] Hurrah! [*In Ecstasy.*] Oh lord, Oh lord! Hurrah! His daughter? Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The House of MORDENT.

CLEMENT and MRS. SARRSNET.

Clem. Are you sure it was Mr. Mordent?*Mrs. S.* I tell you, sir, I was on the watch, and opened the door myself. Take care, my dear, said he, to the sham gentleman lady; and handed her in as lovingly!—The monster!—My lady is bewitched!—She is fabricated!—She can't quit the house. I am sure he must have nailed an invisible horse-shoe to the threshold.*Clem.* But how do you know this pretended youth to be a woman?*Mrs. S.* Did not I hear? I held the candle full flare in her face; it was a perfect picter! I never saw the like.—So she is to be brought home, truly!—Such magnanimous impudence! But I'll go to my lady.*Clem.* Be cautious: you may do mischief.*Mrs. S.* I don't care; I am resolved to stabilate and confound facts. So then, having a sufficient dearth of proofs, we shall sail off in the charut; and be properly received by the Earl, the Viscount, and the Bishop; and be squired into the hall; and be kissed for joy; and shall swim up stairs into the bosom of the family.*Enter CHEVERIL, hastily.**Chev.* Dear Clement, have you seen Mr. Mordent?*Clem.* No:—I am in search of him, on affairs of the utmost importance.*Chev.* So am I.

Clem. No less than the recovery or total loss of his mortgaged lands.

Chev. How?

Clem. I am in great need of advice, and should be glad to consult you.

Chev. Consult!—'Sdeath, man, I am in a hurry! I cannot rest till I have found him.

Clem. Nay, but on the decision of the moment his ruin or safety depends.

Chev. Indeed! If so, my impatience must wait. What is it?

Clem. I hear footsteps.—This way. [Exeunt.]

Enter MORDENT and JOANNA.

Mor. Yes, dear girl, your rare endowments surpass my hopes; and, convinced as I am that beauty is destructive, and wisdom impotent, I joy to find you thus adorned.

Joanna. Wait to know me better. I fear you should prize me above my worth.

Mor. How shall I reward it? Fool that I am! madman that I have been!

Joanna. [Rapturously kissing his Hand.] This is my rich reward!

Mor. I have told you in part my desperate situation. If Grime would but give honest evidence—But of that there is little hope.

Joanna. My greatest fear arises from what you have said of Lady Anne. I must not, will not, be the cause of separation.

Mor. Let me do her justice: She is a miracle of forbearance. I have hated and spurned at the kindness I did not deserve. Her perseverance in good has been my astonishment and my torture.

Joanna. Oh that I could see you reconciled! Oh that I could gain the love of such a lady!

Mor. Of that, sweet girl, you are certain. Len-

nox is with her, and by this she knows your story ; and, I am sure, adores your virtue.

Lady A. [*Without.*] Where is she ?

Mor. I hear her.

Enter LADY ANNE.

Lady A. Oh, noble girl ! [*Runs and embraces JOANNA.*] Forgive this rude tumult of affection, which I cannot restrain.

Joanna. Is it possible ?

Lady A. Mr. Mordent, you are now a million fold more dear to me.

Mor. I cannot bear it !

Lady A. Will you be my daughter ?

Joanna. Oh, madam !

Lady A. Will you ?

Joanna. Adversity I could endure, but this un-
hoped for tide of blessings overpowers me.

Mor. Oh, how I hate myself !

Lady A. And why ?—Can you be ignorant of the virtuous struggles which have caused the conflict you have felt ? The strength of these sensations shows how fitted you are to be great and good.

Mor. To be a———I dare not think.

Lady A. Indeed you are wrong. Had I not been guilty of a thousand errors, you never would have had occasion for this self reproach. Like cowards, we both have shunned inquiry. Let us be more courageous ; let us affectionately communicate our mutual mistakes ; and, while we examine, we shall correct the mind, expand the heart, and render ourselves dear to each other, and beneficent to the whole world.

Mor. Oh, shame, shame !

Lady A. Nay, my love——

Joanna. My dear father !

Mor. Well, well, I will endure existence a little longer, if it be but to hate myself.

Enter CHEVERIL, flying to JOANNA.

Chev. My life! my soul! my precious Joanna!

Mor. They will persuade me presently that happiness is possible.—You have cause, child, to thank Mr. Cheveril?

Joanna. Oh, yes. He has a heart of the noblest stamp.

Mor. Ay, every body right! All angels, except myself: I am cast into the shade; a kind of demon, grinning in the dark.

Chev. Come, come, guardian, dismiss these sombre familiars; they have plagued you long enough. Clement is in eager search of you, to communicate secrets of the utmost importance concerning his uncle.

Mor. The villain!

Chev. Yes;—he is below, half distracted, foaming with rage, and accusing every servant in the house with having stolen his book. I hear him—Pray keep back, my sweet Joanna, but for a moment. [*Exeunt.*

Enter ITEM.

Item. [*Looking about eagerly.*] 'Tis gone! 'tis lost! I am undone! I am murdered! I am betrayed!—I shall be prosecuted, pilloried, fined, cast in damages, obliged to pay all, to refund all, to relinquish all!—all—all—all! I'll hang myself!—I'll drown myself!—I'll cut my throat!—Mordent has got it!—All my secrets, all my projects, all my rogueries,—past, present, and to come!—Oh that I had never been born!—Oh that——

Enter CLEMENT.

[*ITEM runs up to him.*] Have you seen my book?—Give it me!—Where is my book?

Clem. What book?

Item. My account book! my secrets! myself! my

soul! my heart's blood! [*Seizes CLEMENT's Coat Laps, and searches.*] I have it—'tis here—I feel it!

Clem. [*Defending himself.*] Yes, sir, 'tis here. Be pacified.

Item. [*Assaulting.*] I won't! I won't! I'll have it! Give it me! I'll swear a robbery! I'll have you hanged!

Clem. [*Takes a Book, sealed up, out of his Pocket.*] This book, sir, I consider as a sacred trust; and part with it to you I must not.

Item. You shall part with it, villain! You shall! I'll have your soul! 'Tis mine! I'll have your heart! 'Tis mine! I will have it! I will have it! I will have it!

[*Violently assaulting him.*]

Clem. You shall have heart, life, and soul, first!

Item. [*Falls on his Knees.*] My dear nephew! My good boy! My kind Clement! I'll supply all your wants! I'll pay all your debts! I'll never deny any thing you ask! I'll make you my heir!

Clem. You are the agent of Mr. Mordent, whom, I fear, you have deeply wronged. I have a painful duty to perform; but justice must be obeyed: nothing must or shall bribe me to betray an injured man.

Item. I'll give you ten thousand pounds! I'll give you twenty! I'll give you fifty! Would you rob and ruin your uncle? Would you put him in the pillory? Would you see him hanged? [*Falls upon him again.*] Villain! I will have it! 'Tis mine! I will! I will! Thieves! Robbers! Murder! Fire!

Enter MR. MORDENT, LADY ANNE, LENNOX, GRIME, DONALD, JOANNA, and CHEVERIL.

Mor. [*Having received the Book.*] I am glad, Mr. Item, that your inattention, and your nephew's inflexible honesty, have afforded me the means of doing myself justice: that is all I require.

Len. Here is double testimony; your hand writing and your agent.

Item. [*To GRIME.*] Have you impeached then?

Grime. I am a villain, a rascal, a cut-throat!

Mor. Mr. Clement, your worth and virtue are beyond my praise.

Clem. If my conduct escape censure, it is more than I expect.

Mor. If it meet not retribution, all sense of justice is lost. Donald!

Joanna. [*Pressing DONALD'S Hand.*] My watchful guide! My never failing friend!

Chev. Your hand, old boy! You and I must settle accounts. I am I know not how many score pounds a year in your debt.

Mor. What then am I?

Joanna. And I?

Don. Hoot awa! Gin ye wad pay Donald, it mun nae be wi' yeer dirty siller; it mun be wi' yeer affections.

Joanna. True, my noble protector!

[*Kisses his Hand with great Energy.*]

Don. Why ay, noo! That's a receipt in foo.—It makes my hairt gi' sic an a bang!

Mor. Honest, worthy soul! And now to reconcile——

Chev. Come, come; make no speeches. I'll settle the business. I am the proper person. I have eight thousand a year, and ten thousand in my pocket.—Ten? [*To ITEM.*] Is it ten or seventeen?

Item. Seventeen!

Chev. Joanna shall be queen of joy, pleasure, and happiness. Honesty, here, shall settle all his ill gotten gains on his nephew: Lennox, as a bachelor's penance, shall marry his housemaid: and you, old Moloch, [*To GRIME.*] shall go hang yourself.

Len. Spoken like an oracle!

Lady A. How strange are the vicissitudes of fortune! With what gloom was the dawn overcast! How have the storms of this memorable day arisen, and increased even to horror! And now how bright the prospect; and how glowing the hope that it excites! Cherish it, kind friends, with your smiles; and, in the gentle slumbers of the night, let us joyfully dream, that we still merit, and still obtain, your willing favour.

THE END.

STRANGER



CHILDREN - DEAR FATHER! DEAR MOTHER!

ACT IV.

SCENE II.

PAINTED BY HOWARD.

PUBLISHED BY LONGMAN & CO.

THE
STRANGER;

A DRAMA,

IN FIVE ACTS;

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF KOTZEBUE.

BY BENJAMIN THOMPSON, ESQ.

PRINTED, UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS,

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
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REMARKS.

There seems to be required by a number of well meaning persons of the present day a degree of moral perfection in a play, which few literary works attain, and in which sermons, and other holy productions, are at times deficient, though written with the purest intention.

To criticise any book, besides the present drama, was certainly not a premeditated design in writing this little essay; but in support of the position—that every literary work, however guided by truth, may occasionally swerve into error, it may here be stated that the meek spirit of christianity can seldom be traced in any of those pious writings where our ancient religion, the church of Rome, and its clergy, are the subjects: and that political writers, in the time of war, laudably impelled, will slander public enemies into brutes, that the nation may hate them without offence to brotherly love.

Articles of sacred faith are often so piously, yet so ignorantly expounded in what are termed systems of education and instruction—that doubts are created,

where all was before secure, and infidelity sown, where it was meant to be extirpated.

In this general failure of human perfection, the German author of this play has compassionated—and with a high, a sublime, example before him—an adultress. But Kotzebue's pity, vitiated by his imperfect nature, has, it is said, deviated into vice; by restoring this woman to her former rank in life, under the roof of her injured husband.

To reconcile to the virtuous spectator this indecorum, most calamitous woes are first depicted as the consequence of illicit love. The deserted husband and the guilty wife are both presented to the audience as voluntary exiles from society: the one through poignant sense of sorrow for the connubial happiness he has lost—the other from deep contrition for the guilt she has incurred.

The language, as well as the plot and incidents, of this play, describe, with effect, those multiplied miseries which the dishonour of a wife spreads around; but draws more especially upon herself, her husband, and her children.

Kemble's emaciated frame, sunken eye, drooping head, and death-like paleness; his heart-piercing lamentation, that—"he trusted a friend who repaid his hospitality, by alluring from him all that his soul held dear,"—are potent warnings to the modern husband.

Mrs. Siddons, in Mrs. Haller (the just martyr to

her own crimes) speaks in her turn to every married woman; and, in pathetic bursts of grief—in looks of overwhelming shame—in words of deep reproach against herself and her seducer—“conjures each wife to revere the marriage bond.”

Notwithstanding all these distressful and repentant testimonies, preparatory to the reunion of this husband and wife, a delicate spectator feels a certain shudder when the catastrophe takes place,—but there is another spectator more delicate still, who never conceives, that from an agonizing, though an affectionate embrace, (the only proof of reconciliation given, for the play ends here), any farther endearments will ensue, than those of participated sadness, mutual care of their joint offspring, and to smooth each other's passage to the grave.

But should the worst suspicion of the scrupulous critic be true, and this man should actually have taken his wife “for better or for worse,” as on the bridal day—can this be holding out temptation, as alleged, for women to be false to their husbands? Sure it would rather act as a preservative. What woman of common understanding and common cowardice, would dare to dishonour and forsake her husband, if she foresaw she was ever likely to live with him again?

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE STRANGER	<i>Mr. Kemble.</i>
COUNT WINTERSEN	<i>Mr. Barrymore.</i>
BARON STEINFORT	<i>Mr. Palmer.</i>
MR. SOLOMON	<i>Mr. Wewitzer.</i>
PETER	<i>Mr. Suett.</i>
TOBIAS	<i>Mr. Aickin.</i>
FRANCIS	<i>Mr. R. Palmer.</i>
GEORGE	<i>Mr. Webb.</i>
COUNT'S SON (five years old)	<i>Master Wells.</i>
STRANGER'S SON (five years old)	<i>Master Stokely.</i>
MRS. HALLER	<i>Mrs. Siddons.</i>
COUNTESS WINTERSEN	<i>Mrs. Goodall.</i>
CHARLOTTE	<i>Miss Stuart.</i>
ANNETTE	<i>Mrs. Bland.</i>
CLAUDINE	<i>Miss Leake.</i>
SUSAN	<i>Mrs. Jones.</i>
STRANGER'S DAUGHTER (four years old)	} <i>Miss Beton.</i>

TENANTS, SERVANTS, DANCERS, &c.

SCENE,—Germany.

THE
STRANGER.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The Skirts of COUNT WINTERSEN'S Park.—The Park Gates in the centre.—On one side a low Lodge, among the Trees.—On the other, in the back ground, a Peasant's Hut.

Enter PETER.

Pet. Pooh! pooh!—never tell me.—I'm a clever lad, for all father's crying out every minute, "Peter," and "stupid Peter!" But I say, Peter is not stupid, though father will always be so wise. First, I talk too much; then I talk too little; and if I talk a bit to myself, he calls me a driveller. Now, I like best to talk to myself; for I never contradict myself, and I don't laugh at myself as other folks do. That laughing is often a plaguy teasing custom. To be sure when Mrs. Haller laughs, one can bear it well enough; there is a sweetness even in her reproof, that somehow—But, lud! I had near forgot what I was sent about.—Yes, then they would have laughed at me indeed.—*[Draws a green purse from his pocket.]*

—I am to carry this money to old Tobias; and Mrs. Haller said I must be sure not to blab, or say that she had sent it. Well, well, she may be easy for that matter; not a word shall drop from my lips. Mrs. Haller is charming, but silly, if father is right; for father says, “He that spends his money is not wise,” but “he that gives it away, is stark mad.”

Enter the STRANGER, from the Lodge, followed by FRANCIS.—At sight of PETER, the STRANGER stops, and looks suspiciously at him. PETER stands opposite to him, with his mouth wide open. At length he takes off his hat, scrapes a bow, and goes into the Hut.

Stra. Who is that?

Fra. The steward's son.

Stra. Of the Castle?

Fra. Yes.

Stra. [*After a pause.*] You were—you were speaking last night—

Fra. Of the old countryman.

Stra. Ay.

Fra. You would not hear me out.

Stra. Proceed.

Fra. He is poor.

Stra. Who told you so?

Fra. Himself.

Stra. [*With acrimony.*] Ay, ay; he knows how to tell his story, no doubt.

Fra. And to impose, you think?

Stra. Right!

Fra. This man does not.

Stra. Fool!

Fra. A feeling fool is better than a cold sceptic.

Stra. False!

Fra. Charity begets gratitude.

Stra. False!

Fra. And blesses the giver more than the receiver.

Stra. True.

Fra. Well, sir. 'This countryman—

Stra. Has he complained to you?

Fra. Yes.

Stra. He, who is really unhappy, never complains.

[*Pauses.*] Francis, you have had means of education beyond your lot in life, and hence you are encouraged to attempt imposing on me:—but go on.

Fra. His only son has been taken from him.

Stra. Taken from him?

Fra. By the exigency of the times, for a soldier.

Stra. Ay!

Fra. The old man is poor.

Stra. 'Tis likely.

Fra. Sick and forsaken.

Stra. I cannot help him.

Fra. Yes.

Stra. How?

Fra. By money. He may buy his son's release.

Stra. I'll see him myself.

Fra. Do so.

Stra. But if he is an impostor!

Fra. He is not.

Stra. In that hut?

Fra. In that hut. [*STRANGER goes into the Hut.*]

A good master, though one almost loses the use of speech by living with him. A man kind and clear—though I cannot understand him. He rails against the whole world, and yet no beggar leaves his door unsatisfied. I have now lived three years with him, and yet I know not who he is. A hater of society, no doubt; but not by Providence intended to be so. Misanthropy in his head, not in his heart.

Enter the STRANGER and PETER, from the Hut.

Pet. Pray walk on.

Stra. [*To FRANCIS.*] Fool!

Fra. So soon returned!

Stra. What should I do there?

Fra. Did you not find it as I said?

Stra. This lad I found.

Fra. What has he to do with your charity?

Stra. The old man and he understand each other perfectly well.

Fra. How?

Stra. What were this boy and the countryman doing?

Fra. [*Smiling and shaking his head.*] Well, you shall hear. [*To PETER.*] Young man, what were you doing in that hut?

Pet. Doing!—Nothing.

Fra. Well, but you couldn't go there for nothing.

Pet. And why not, pray?—But I did go there for nothing, though.—Do you think one must be paid for every thing?—if Mrs. Haller were to give me but a smiling look, I'd jump up to my neck in the great pond for nothing.

Fra. It seems then Mrs. Haller sent you.

Pet. Why, yes—but I'm not to talk about it.

Fra. Why so?

Pet. How should I know? “Look you,” says Mrs. Haller, “Master Peter, be so good as not to mention it to any body.” [*With much consequence.*] “Master Peter be so good”—Hi! hi! hi!—“Master Peter be so”—Hi! hi! hi!—

Fra. Oh! that is quite a different thing. Of course you must be silent then.

Pet. I know that; and so I am too. For I told old Tobias—says I, “Now, you're not to think as how Mrs. Haller sent the money; for I shall not say a word about that as long as I live,” says I.

Fra. There you were very right. Did you carry him much money?

Pet. I don't know; I didn't count it. It was in

a bit of a green purse. Mayhap it may be some little matter that she has scraped together in the last fortnight.

Fra. And why just in the last fortnight?

Pet. Because about a fortnight since I carried him some money before.

Fra. From Mrs. Haller?

Pet. Ay, sure; who else; think you? Father's not such a fool. He says it is our bounden duty, as christians, to take care of our money, and not give any thing away, especially in summer; for then, says he, there's herbs and roots enough in conscience to satisfy all the reasonable hungry poor. But I say father's wrong, and Mrs. Haller's right.

Fra. Yes, yes.—But this Mrs. Haller seems a strange woman, Peter.

Pet. Ay, at times she's plaguy odd. Why, she'll sit and cry you a whole day through, without any one's knowing why.—Ay, and yet, somehow or other, whenever she cries, I always cry too—without knowing why.

Fra. [*To the STRANGER.*] Are you satisfied?

Stra. Rid me of that babbler.

Fra. Good day, Master Peter.

Pet. You're not going yet, are you?

Fra. Mrs. Haller will be waiting for an answer.

Pet. So she will. And I have another place or two to call at. [*Takes off his hat to the STRANGER.*]
Servant, sir!

Stra. Pshaw!

Pet. Pshaw! What—he's angry. [*PETER turns to FRANCIS, in a half whisper.*] He's angry, I suppose, because he can get nothing out of me.

Fra. It almost seems so.

Pet. Ay, I'd have him to know I'm no blab.

[*Exit.*]

Fra. Now, sir?

Stra. What do you want?

Fra. Were you not wrong, sir?

Stra. Hem! wrong!

Fra. Can you still doubt?

Stra. I'll hear no more! Who is this Mrs. Haller? Why do I always follow her path? Go where I will, whenever I try to do good, she has always been before me.

Fra. You should rejoice at that.

Stra. Rejoice!

Fra. Surely! That there are other good and charitable people in the world beside yourself.

Stra. Oh, yes!

Fra. Why not seek to be acquainted with her? I saw her yesterday in the garden up at the Castle. Mr. Solomon, the steward, says she has been unwell, and confined to her room almost ever since we have been here. But one would not think it, to look at her; for a more beautiful creature I never saw.

Stra. So much the worse. Beauty is a mask.

Fra. In her it seems a mirror of the soul. Her charities—

Stra. Talk not to me of her charities. All women wish to be conspicuous:—in town by their wit: in the country by their heart.

Fra. 'Tis immaterial in what way good is done.

Stra. No; 'tis not immaterial.

Fra. To this poor old man at least.

Stra. He needs no assistance of mine.

Fra. His most urgent wants indeed, Mrs. Haller has relieved: but whether she has or could have given as much as would purchase the liberty of the son, the prop of his age—

Stra. Silence! I will not give him a doit! [*In a peevish tone.*] You interest yourself very warmly in his behalf. Perhaps you are to be a sharer in the gift.

Fra. Sir, sir, that did not come from your heart.

Stra. [*Recollecting himself.*] Forgive me!

Fra. Poor master! How must the world have used you, before it could have instilled this hatred of mankind, this constant doubt of honesty and virtue!

Stra. Leave me to myself!

[*Throws himself on a seat; takes from his pocket "Zimmerman on Solitude," and reads.*]

Fra. [*Aside, surveying him.*] Again reading! Thus it is from morn to night. To him nature has no beauty; life, no charm. For three years I have never seen him smile. What will be his fate at last? Nothing diverts him. Oh, if he would but attach himself to any living thing! were it an animal—for something man must love.

Enter TOBIAS, from the Hut.

Tob. Oh! how refreshing, after seven long weeks, to feel these warm sun beams once again! Thanks! thanks! bounteous Heaven, for the joy I taste.

[*Presses his cap between his hands, looks up and prays.—The STRANGER observes him attentively.*]

Fra. [*To the STRANGER.*] This old man's share of earthly happiness can be but little; yet mark how grateful he is for his portion of it.

Stra. Because, though old, he is but a child in the leading-strings of Hope.

Fra. Hope is the nurse of life.

Stra. And her cradle is the grave.

[*TOBIAS replaces his cap.*]

Fra. I wish you joy. I am glad to see you are so much recovered.

Tob. Thank you. Heaven, and the assistance of a kind lady, have saved me for another year or two.

Fra. How old are you, pray?

Tob. Seventy-six. To be sure I can except but little joy before I die. Yet, there is another, and a better world.

Fra. To the unfortunate, then, death is scarce an evil?

Tob. Am I so unfortunate? Do I not enjoy this glorious morning? Am I not in health again! Believe me, sir, he, who, leaving the bed of sickness, for the first time breathes the fresh pure air, is, at that moment, the happiest of his Maker's creatures.

Fra. Yet 'tis a happiness that fails upon enjoyment.

Tob. True; but less so in old age. Some fifty years ago my father left me this cottage. I was a strong lad; and took an honest wife. Heaven blessed my farm with rich crops, and my marriage with five children. This lasted nine or ten years. Two of my children died. I felt it sorely. The land was afflicted with a famine. My wife assisted me in supporting my family; but four years after, she left our dwelling for a better place. And of my five children only one son remained. This was blow upon blow. It was long before I regained my fortitude. At length resignation and religion had their effect. I again attached myself to life. My son grew, and helped me in my work. Now the state has called him away to bear a musket. This is to me a loss indeed. I can work no more. I am old and weak; and true it is, but for Mrs. Haller, I must have perished.

Fra. Still then life has its charms for you?

Tob. Why not, while the world holds any thing that's dear to me? Have not I a son?

Fra. Who knows that you will ever see him more? He may be dead.

Tob. Alas! he may. But as long as I am not sure of it, he lives to me: And if he falls, 'tis in his coun-

try's cause. Nay, should I lose him, still I should not wish to die. Here is the hut in which I was born. Here is the tree that grew with me; and, I am almost ashamed to confess it—I have a dog I love.

Fra. A dog!

Tob. Yes!—smile if you please: but hear me. My benefactress once came to my hut herself, some time before you fixed here. The poor animal, unused to see the form of elegance and beauty enter the door of penury, growled at her.—“I wonder you keep that surly, ugly animal, Mr. Tobias,” said she; “you, who have hardly food enough for yourself.”—“Ah, madam,” I replied, “if I part with him, are you sure that any thing else will love me?”—she was pleased with my answer.

Fra. [*To STRANGER.*] Excuse me, sir, but I wish you had listened.

Stra. I have listened.

Fra. Then, sir, I wish you would follow this poor old man's example.

Stra. [*Pauses.*] Here; take this book, and lay it on my desk. [*Francis goes into the Lodge with the book.*] How much has this Mrs. Haller given you?

Tob. Oh, sir, she has given me so much, that I can look towards winter without fear.

Stra. No more?

Tob. What could I do with more?—Ah! true; I might—

Stra. I know it.—You might buy your son's release.—There! [*Presses a purse into his hand, and exit.*]

Tob. What is all this? [*Opens the purse, and finds it full of gold.*] Merciful Heaven!—

Enter FRANCIS.

—Now look, sir: is confidence in Heaven unrewarded?

Fra. I wish you joy! My master gave you this!

Tob. Yes, your noble master. Heaven reward him!

Fra. Just like him. He sent me with his book, that no one might be witness to his bounty.

Tob. He would not even take my thanks. He was gone before I could speak.

Fra. Just his way.

Tob. Now, I'll go as quick as these old legs will bear me. What a delightful errand! I go to release my Robert! How the lad will rejoice! There is a girl too, in the village, that will rejoice with him. O Providence, how good art thou! Years of distress never can efface the recollection of former happiness; but one joyful moment drives from the memory an age of misery. *[Exit.]*

Fra. *[Looks after him.]* Why am I not wealthy? 'Sdeath! why am I not a prince! I never thought myself envious; but I feel I am. Yes, I must envy those who, with the will, have the power to do good. *[Exit.]*

SCENE II.

An Antichamber in Wintersen Castle.

Enter SUSAN, meeting Footmen with table and chairs.

Susan. Why, George! Harry! where have you been loitering? Put down these things. Mrs. Haller has been calling for you this half hour.

Geo. Well, here I am then. What does she want with me?

Susan. That she will tell you herself. Here she comes.

Enter MRS. HALLER, (with a letter, a MAID following.)

Mrs. H. Very well; if those things are done, let the drawing-room be made ready immediately.—*[Exit MAIDS.]* And, George, run immediately into the park, and tell Mr. Solomon I wish to speak with

him. [*Exit FOOTMAN.*] I cannot understand this. I do not learn whether their coming to this place be but the whim of a moment, or a plan for a longer stay : if the latter, farewell, solitude ! farewell, study ! —farewell !—Yes, I must make room for gaiety, and mere frivolity. Yet could I willingly submit to all ; but, should the Countess give me new proofs of her attachment, perhaps of her respect, Oh ! how will my conscience upbraid me ! Or—I shudder at the thought ! if this seat be visited by company, and chance should conduct hither any of my former acquaintance—Alas ! alas ! how wretched is the being who fears the sight of any one fellow-creature ! But, oh ! superior misery ! to dread still more the presence of a former friend !—Who's there ?

Enter PETER.

Pet. Nobody. It's only me.

Mrs. H. So soon returned ?

Pet. Sharp lad, an't I ? On the road I've had a bit of talk too, and—

Mrs. H. But you have observed my directions !

Pet. Oh, yes, yes :—I told old Tobias as how he would never know as long as he lived that the money came from you.

Mrs. H. You found him quite recovered, I hope ?

Pet. Ay, sure did I. He's coming out to-day for the first time.

Mrs. H. I rejoice to hear it.

Pet. He said that he was obliged to you for all ; and before dinner would crawl up to thank you.

Mrs. H. Good Peter do me another service.

Pet. Ay, a hundred, if you'll only let me have a good long stare at you.

Mrs. H. With all my heart ! Observe when old Tobias comes, and send him away. Tell him I am busy, or asleep, or unwell, or what you please.

Pet. I will, I will.

Sol. [*Without.*] There, there, go to the post-office.

Mrs. H. Oh! here comes Mr. Solomon.

Pet. What! father?—Ay, so there is. Father's a main clever man: he knows what's going on all over the world.

Mr. H. No wonder; for you know he receives as many letters as a prime minister and all his secretaries.

Enter SOLOMON.

Sol. Good morning, good morning to you, Mrs. Haller. It gives me infinite pleasure to see you look so charmingly well. You have had the goodness to send for your humble servant. Any news from the Great City? There are very weighty matters in agitation. I have my letters too.

Mrs. H. [*Smiling.*] I think, Mr. Solomon, you must correspond with the four quarters of the globe.

Sol. Beg pardon, not with the whole world, Mrs. Haller: but [*Consequently.*] to be sure I have correspondents, on whom I can rely, in the chief cities of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.

Mrs. H. And yet I have my doubts whether you know what is to happen this very day at this very place.

Sol. At this very place! Nothing material. We meant to have sown a little barley to-day, but the ground is too dry; and the sheep-shearing is not to be till to-morrow.

Pet. No, nor the bull-baiting till—

Sol. Hold your tongue, blockhead! Get about your business.

Pet. Blockhead; there again! I suppose I'm not to open my mouth. [*To MRS. HALLER.*] Good bye! [*Exit.*]

Mrs. H. The Count will be here to-day.

Sol. How! What!

Mrs. H. With his lady, and his brother-in-law, Baron Steinfort.

Sol. My letters say nothing of this. You are laughing at your humble servant.

Mrs. H. You know, sir, I'm not much given to jesting.

Sol. Peter!—Good lack-a-day!—His Right Honourable Excellency Count Wintersen, and her Right Honourable Excellency the Countess Wintersen, and his Honourable Lordship Baron Steinfort—And, Lord have mercy! nothing in proper order?—Here, Peter! Peter!

Enter PETER.

Pet. Well, now; What's the matter again?

Sol. Call all the house together directly! Send to the game keeper; tell him to bring some venison. Tell Rebecca to uncase the furniture, and take the covering from the Venetian looking glasses, that her Right Honourable Ladyship the Countess may look at her gracious countenance: and tell the cook to let me see him without loss of time: and tell John to catch a brace or two of carp. And tell—and tell—and tell—tell Frederick to friz my Sunday wig.—Mercy on us!—Tell—There—Go!—*[Exit PETER.]* Heavens and earth! so little of the new furnishing of this old castle is completed—Where are we to put his Honourable Lordship the Baron?

Mrs. H. Let him have the little chamber at the head of the stairs; it is a neat room, and commands a beautiful prospect.

Sol. Very right, very right. But that room has always been occupied by the Count's private secretary. Suppose!—Hold, I have it. You know the little lodge at the end of the park: we can thrust the secretary into that.

Mrs. H. You forget, Mr. Solomon; you told me that the Stranger lived there.

Sol. Pshaw! What have we to do with the Stranger?—Who told him to live there?—He must turn out.

Mrs. H. 'That would be unjust; for you said, that you let the dwelling to him, and by your own account he pays well for it.

Sol. He does, he does. But nobody knows who he is. The devil himself can't make him out. To be sure, I lately received a letter from Spain, which informed me that a spy had taken up his abode in this country, and from the description—

Mrs. H. A spy! Ridiculous! Every thing I have heard bespeaks him to be a man, who may be allowed to dwell any where. His life is solitude and silence.

Sol. So it is.

Mrs. H. You tell me too he does much good.

Sol. That he does.

Mrs. H. He hurts nothing; not the worm in his way.

Sol. That he does not.

Mrs. H. He troubles no one.

Sol. True! true!

Mrs. H. Well, what do you want more?

Sol. I want to know who he is. If the man would only converse a little, one might have an opportunity of *pumping*; but if one meets him in the lime walk, or by the river, it is nothing but—"Good morrow;"—and off he marches. Once or twice I have contrived to edge in a word—"Fine day."—"Yes."—"Taking a little exercise, I perceive."—"Yes:"—and off again like a shot. The devil take such close fellows, say I. And, like master like man; not a syllable do I know of that mumps his servant, except that his name is Francis.

Mrs. H. You are putting yourself into a passion, and quite forget who are expected.

Sol. So I do—Mercy on us!—There now, you see what misfortunes arise from not knowing people.

Mrs. H. 'Tis near twelve o'clock already! If his lordship has stolen an hour from his usual sleep, the

family must soon be here. I go to my duty; you will attend to your's, Mr. Solomon. *[Exit.*

Sol. Yes, I'll look after my duty, never fear. There goes another of the same class. Nobody knows who she is again. However, thus much I do know of her, that her Right Honourable Ladyship the Countess, all at once, popped her into the house, like a blot of ink upon a sheet of paper. But why, wherefore, or for what reason, not a soul can tell.—“She is to manage the family within doors.” She to manage? Fire and faggots! Haven't I managed every thing within and without, most reputably, these twenty years? I must own I grow a little old, and she does take a deal of pains: but all this she learned of me. When she first came here—Mercy on us! she didn't know that linen was made of flax. But what was to be expected from one who has no foreign correspondence. *[Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Drawing Room in the Castle, with a Piano Forte, Harp, Music, Book-stand, Sofas, Chairs, Tables, &c.

Enter SOLOMON.

Sol. Well, for once I think I have the advantage of Madam Haller. Such a dance have I provided to welcome their Excellencies, and she quite out of the secret! And such a hornpipe by the little Brunette! I'll have a rehearsal first though, and then surprise their honours after dinner.

[Flourish of rural music without.]

Pet. [*Without.*] Stop ; not yet, not yet : but make way there, make way, my good friends, tenants, and villagers—John ! George ! Frederick ! Good friends, make way.

Sol. It is not the Count : it's only Baron Steinfort. Stand back, I say, and stop the music !

Enter BARON STEINFORT, ushered in by PETER and FOOTMAN. PETER mimicks and apes his father.

Sol. I have the honour to introduce to your lordship myself Mr. Solomon, who blesses the hour in which fortune allows him to become acquainted with the Honourable Baron Steinfort, brother-in-law of his Right Honourable Excellency Count Wintersen, my noble master.

Pet. Bless our noble master !

Bar. Old and young, I see they'll allow me no peace. [*Aside.*] Enough, enough, good Mr. Solomon. I am a soldier. I pay but few compliments, and require as few from others.

Sol. I beg my lord—We do live in the country to be sure, but we are acquainted with the reverence due to exalted personages.

Pet. Yes—We are acquainted with exalted personages.

Bar. What is to become of me ?—Well, well, I hope we shall be better acquainted. You must know Mr. Solomon, I intend to assist, for a couple of months at least, in attacking the well-stocked cellars of Wintersen.

Sol. Why not whole years, my lord ?—Inexpressible would be the satisfaction of your humble servant. And, though I say it, well stocked indeed are our cellars. I have, in every respect, here managed matters in so frugal and provident a way, that his Right Honourable Excellency the Count, will be astonished. [*BARON yawns.*] Extremely sorry it is not in my power to entertain your lordship.

Pet. Extremely sorry.

Sol. Where can Mrs. Haller have hid herself?

Bar. Mrs. Haller! who is she?

Sol. Why, who she is, I can't exactly tell your lordship.

Pet. No, nor I.

Sol. None of my correspondents give any account of her. She is here in the capacity of a kind of a superior housekeeper. Methinks I hear her silver voice upon the stairs. I will have the honour of sending her to your lordship in an instant.

Bar. Oh! don't trouble yourself.

Sol. No trouble whatever! I remain at all times, your honourable lordship's most obedient, humble, and devoted servant. *[Exit, bowing.]*

Pet. Devoted servant. *[Exit, bowing.]*

Bar. Now for a fresh plague. Now am I to be tormented by some chattering old ugly hag, till I am stunned with her noise and officious hospitality. Oh, patience! what a virtue art thou!

Enter MRS. HALLER, with a becoming curtsey.

BARON rises, and returns a bow, in confusion.

[Aside.] No, old she is not. *[Casts another glance at her.]* No, by Jove, nor ugly.

Mrs. H. I rejoice, my lord, in thus becoming acquainted with the brother of my benefactress.

Bar. Madam, that title shall be doubly valuable to me, since it gives me an introduction equally to be rejoiced at.

Mrs. H. *[Without attending to the compliment.]* This lovely weather, then, has enticed the Count from the city?

Bar. Not exactly that. You know him. Sunshine or clouds are to him alike, as long as eternal summer reigns in his own heart and family.

Mrs. H. The count possesses a most cheerful and amiable philosophy. Ever in the same happy humour;

ever enjoying each minute of his life. But you must confess, my lord, that he is a favourite child of fortune, and has much to be grateful to her for. Not merely because she has given him birth and riches, but for a native sweetness of temper, never to be acquired; and a graceful suavity of manners, whose school must be the mind. And, need I enumerate among fortune's favours, the hand and affections of your accomplished sister?

Bar. [*More and more struck as her understanding opens upon him.*] True, madam. My good easy brother, too, seems fully sensible of his happiness, and is resolved to retain it. He has quitted the service to live here. I am yet afraid he may soon grow weary of Wintersen and retirement.

Mrs. H. I should trust not. They, who bear a cheerful and unrepenting conscience into solitude surely must increase the measure of their own enjoyments. They quit the poor, precarious, the dependent pleasures, which they borrowed from the world, to draw a real bliss from that exhaustless source of true delight, the fountain of a pure unsullied heart.

Bar. Has retirement long possessed so lovely an advocate?

Mrs. H. I have lived here three years.

Bar. And never felt a secret wish for the society you left, and must have adorned?

Mrs. H. Never.

Bar. To feel thus belongs either to a very rough or a very polished soul. The first sight convinced me in which class I am to place you.

Mrs. H. [*With a sigh.*] There may, perhaps, be a third class.

Bar. Indeed, madam, I wish not to be thought forward; but women always seemed to me less calculated for retirement than men. We have a thousand

employments, a thousand amusements, which you have not.

Mrs. H. Dare I ask what they are?

Bar. We ride—we hunt—we play—read—write.—

Mrs. H. The noble employments of the chase, and the still more noble employment of play, I grant you.

Bar. Nay, but dare I ask what are your employments for a day?

Mrs. H. Oh, my lord! you cannot imagine how quickly time passeth when a certain uniformity guides the minutes of our life. How often do I ask, “Is Saturday come again so soon?” On a bright cheerful morning, my books and breakfast are carried out upon the grass-plot. Then is the sweet picture of reviving industry and eager innocence always new to me. The birds’ note, so often heard, still waken new ideas: the herds are let into the fields: the peasant bends his eye upon his plough. Every thing lives and moves; and in every creature’s mind it seems as it were morning. Towards evening I begin to roam abroad: from the park into the meadows. And sometimes, returning, I pause to look at the village boys and girls as they play. Then do I bless their innocence, and pray to Heaven, those laughing, thoughtless hours, could be their lot for ever.

Bar. This is excellent!—But these are summer amusements.—The winter! the winter!

Mrs. H. Why for ever picture winter like old age, torpid, tedious, and uncheerful? Winter has its own delights: this is the time to instruct and mend the mind by reading and reflection. At this season, too, I often take my harp, and amuse myself by playing or singing the little favourite airs that remind me of the past, or solicit hope for the future.

Bar. Happy indeed are they who can thus create, and vary their own pleasures and employments.

Enter PETER.

Pet. Well—well—Pray now—I was ordered—I can keep him back no longer—He will come in.

Enter TOBIAS, forcing his way.

Tob. I must, good Heaven, I must!

Mrs. H. [*Confused.*] I have no time at present—I—I—You see I am not alone.

Tob. Oh! this good Gentleman will forgive me.

Bar. What do you want?

Tob. To return thanks. Even charity is a burden if one may not be grateful for it.

Mrs. H. To-morrow, good Tobias; to-morrow.

Bar. Nay, no false delicacy, madam. Allow him to vent the feelings of his heart; and permit me to witness a scene which convinces me, even more powerfully than your conversation, how nobly you employ your time. Speak, old man.

Tob. Oh, lady, that each word which drops from my lips, might call down a blessing on your head! I lay forsaken and dying in my hut: not even bread nor hope remained. Oh! then you came in the form of an angel, brought medicines to me; and your sweet consoling voice did more than those. I am recovered. To-day, for the first time, I have returned thanks in presence of the sun: and now I come to you, noble lady. Let me drop my tears upon your charitable hand. For your sake, Heaven has blessed my latter days. The Stranger too, who lives near me, has given me a purse of gold to buy my son's release. I am on my way to the city: I shall purchase my Robert's release. Then I shall have an honest daughter-in-law. And you, if ever after that you pass our happy cottage, oh! what must you feel when you say to yourself, "This is my work!"

Mrs. H. [*In a tone of entreaty.*] Enough, Tobias; enough!

Tob. I beg pardon! I cannot utter what is breathing in my breast. There is One, who knows it. May His blessing and your own heart reward you.

[*Exit, PETER following. MRS. HALLER casts her eyes upon the ground, and contends against the confusion of an exalted soul, when surprised in a good action. The BARON stands opposite to her, and from time to time casts a glance at her, in which his heart is swimming.*]

Mrs. H. [*Endeavouring to bring about a conversation.*] I suppose, my lord, we may expect the Count and Countess every moment now?

Bar. Not just yet, madam. He travels at his leisure. I am selfish, perhaps, in not being anxious for his speed: the delay has procured me a delight which I never shall forget.

Mrs. H. [*Smiling.*] You satirise mankind, my lord.

Bar. How so?

Mrs. H. In supposing such scenes to be uncommon.

Bar. I confess I was little prepared for such an acquaintance as yourself: I am extremely surprised. When Solomon told me your name and situation, how could I suppose that——Pardon my curiosity: You have been, or are married?

Mrs. H. [*Suddenly sinking from her cheerful raille-ry into mournful gloom.*] I have been married, my lord.

Bar. [*Whose enquiries evince his curiosity, yet are restrained within the bounds of the nicest respect.*] A widow, then?

Mrs. H. I beseech you—There are strings in the human heart, which touched, will sometimes utter dreadful discord—I beseech you—

Bar. I understand you. I see you know how to conceal every thing except your perfections.

Mrs. H. My perfections, alas!—[*Rural music without.*] But I hear the happy tenantry announce the Count's arrival. Your pardon, my lord; I must attend them. [Exit.]

Bar. Excellent creature!—What is she, and what can be her history? I must seek my sister instantly. How strong and how sudden is the interest I feel for her! But it is a feeling I ought to check. And yet, why so! Whatever are the emotions she has inspired, I am sure they arise from the perfections of her mind: and never shall they be met with unworthiness in mine. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

The Lawn.

SOLOMON and PETER are discovered arranging the
TENANTRY,—*Rural music.*

Enter COUNT and COUNTESS WINTERSEN, (the latter leading her child,) the BARON, MRS. HALLER, CHARLOTTE, and SERVANTS following.

Sol. Welcome, ten thousand welcomes, your Excellencies. Some little preparation made for welcome too. But that will be seen anon.

Count. Well! here we are! Heaven bless our advance and retreat! Mrs. Haller, I bring you an invalid, who in future will swear to no flag but yours.

Mrs. H. Mine flies for retreat and rural happiness.

Count. But not without retreating graces, and retiring cupids too.

Countess. [Who has in the mean time kindly embraced MRS. HALLER, and by her been welcomed to Wintersen.] My dear Count, you forget that I am present.

Count. Why, in the name of chivalry, how can I do less than your gallant brother, the Baron? who has

been so kind as nearly to kill my four greys, in order to be here five minutes before me.

Bar. Had I known all the charms of this place, you should have said so with justice.

Countess. Don't you think William much grown?

Mrs. H. The sweet boy!

[Stoops to kiss him, and deep melancholy over-shadows her countenance.]

Count. Well, Solomon, you've provided a good dinner?

Sol. As good as haste would allow, please your Right Honourable Excellency!

Pet. Yes, as good as—

[COUNT goes aside with SOLOMON and PETER,

Bar. Tell me, I conjure you, sister, what jewel you have thus buried in the country?

Countess. Ha! ha! ha! What, brother, you caught at last?

Bar. Answer me.

Countess. Well, her name is Mrs. Haller.

Bar. That I know; but—

Countess. But!—but I know no more myself.

Bar. Jestings apart, I wish to know.

Countess. And, jesting apart, I wish you would not plague me. I have at least a hundred thousand important things to do. Heavens! the vicar may come to pay his respects to me before I have been at my toilet; of course I must consult my looking-glass on the occasion. Come, William, will you help to dress me, or stay with your father?

Count. We'll take care of him.

Countess. Come, Mrs. Haller.

[Exit with MRS. HALLER, CHARLOTTE following.]

Bar. *[Aside, and going.]* I am in a very singular humour.

Count. Whither so fast, good brother?

Bar. To my apartment: I have letters to—I—

Count. Pshaw! stay. Let us take a turn in the park together.

Bar. Excuse me. I am not perfectly well. I should be but bad company. I—

[*Exit.—The TENANTRY retire.*]

Count. Well, Solomon, you are as great a fool as ever, I see.

Sol. Ha! ha! ha! At your Right Honourable Excellency's service.

Count. [*Points to PETER.*] Who is that ape in the corner?

Sol. Ape!—Oh! that is—with respect to your Excellency be it spoken—the son of my body; by name Peter. [PETER bows.]

Count. So, so! Well, how goes all on?

Sol. Well and good; well and good. Your Excellency will see how I've improved the park: You'll not know it again. A hermitage here; serpentine walks there; an obelisk; a ruin; and all so sparingly, all done with the most economical economy.

Count. Well, I'll have a peep at your obelisk and ruins, while they prepare for dinner!

Sol. I have already ordered it, and will have the honour of attending your Right Honourable Excellency.

Count. Come, lead the way. Peter, attend your young master to the house; we must not tire him.

[*Exit, conducted by SOLOMON.*]

Pet. We'll go round this way, your little Excellency, and then we shall see the bridge as we go by; and the new boat, with all the fine ribbands and streamers. This way, your little Excellency.

[*Exit, leading the child.*]

SCENE III.

*The Antichamber.**Enter* MRS. HALLER.

Mrs. H. What has thus alarmed and subdued me? My tears flow ; my heart bleeds. Already had I apparently overcome my chagrin : already had I at least assumed that easy gaiety once so natural to me, when the sight of this child in an instant overpowered me. When the Countess called him William—Oh ! she knew not that she plunged a poignard in my heart. I have a William too, who must be as tall as this, if he be still alive. Ah ! yes, if he be still alive. His little sister too ! Why, fancy, dost thou rack me thus ? Why dost thou image my poor children, fainting in sickness, and crying to their mother. To the mother who has abandoned them ? [*Weeps.*] What a wretched outcast am I ! And that just to-day I should be doomed to feel these horrible emotions ! just to-day, when disguise was so necessary.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Char. [*Entering.*] Very pretty ; very pretty indeed ; better send me to the garret at once. Your servant, Mrs. Haller. I beg, madam, I may have a room fit for a respectable person.

Mrs. H. The chamber into which you have been shown is, I think, a very neat one.

Char. A very neat one, is it ? Up the back stairs, and over the laundry ! I should never be able to close my eyes.

Mrs. H. [*Very mildly.*] I slept there a whole year.

Char. Did you ? Then I advise you to remove into it again, and the sooner the better. I'd have you to know, madam, there is a material difference between certain persons and certain persons. Much depends

upon the manner in which one has been educated. I think, madam, it would only be proper if you resigned your room to me.

Mrs. H. If the Countess desires it, certainly.

Char. The Countess! Very pretty, indeed! Would you have me think of plaguing her ladyship with such trifles? I shall order my trunk to be carried wherever I please.

Mrs. H. Certainly; only not into my chamber.

Char. Provoking creature! But how could I expect to find breeding among creatures born of one knows not whom, and coming one knows not whence?

Mrs. H. The remark is very just.

Enter PETER, in haste.

Pet. Oh lud! Oh lud! Oh lud! Oh lud!

Mrs. H. What's the matter?

Pet. The child has fallen into the river! His little Excellency is drowned!

Mrs. H. Who? What?

Pet. His honour, my young master!

Mrs. H. Drowned?

Pet. Yes.

Mrs. H. Dead?

Pet. No; he's not dead.

Mrs. H. Well, well, then softly;—you will alarm the Countess.

Enter the BARON.

Bar. What is the matter? Why all this noise?

Pet. Noise? why—

Mrs. H. Be not alarmed, my lord. Whatever may have happened, the dear child is now at least safe. You said so, I think, master Peter?

Pet. Why, to be sure, his little Excellency is not hurt; but he's very wet, though: and the Count is taking him by the garden door to the house.

Bar. Right, that the Countess may not be alarmed. But tell us, young man, how could it happen?

Pet. From beginning to end?

Mrs. H. Never mind particulars. You attended the dear child?

Pet. True.

Mrs. H. Into the park?

Pet. True.

Mrs. H. And then you went to the river?

Pet. True—Why, rabbit it, I believe you're a witch.

Mrs. H. Well, and what happened further?

Pet. Why, you see, his dear little Excellency would see the bridge that father built out of the old summer house; and the streamers, and the boat, and all that—I only turned my head round for a moment, to look after a magpie—crush! down went the bridge, with his little Excellency; and oh, how I was scared to see him carried down the river!

Bar. And you drew him out again directly?

Pet. No, I didn't.

Mrs. H. No; your father did?

Pet. No, he didn't.

Mrs. H. Why you did not leave him in the water?

Pet. Yes, we did!—But we bawled as loud as we could; you might have heard us down to the village.

Mrs. H. Ay—and so the people came immediately to his assistance.

Pet. No, they didn't: but the Stranger came, that lives yonder, close to old Toby, and never speaks a syllable. Odsbodlikins! what a devil of a fellow it is! With a single spring bounces he slap into the torrent; sails and dives about and about like a duck; gets me hold of the little angel's hair, and, Heaven bless him! pulls him safe and sound to dry land again.—Ha! ha! ha!

Bar. Is the Stranger with them?

Pet. Oh lud! no. He ran away. His Excellency wanted to thank him, and all that; but he was off; vanquished like a ghost.

Enter SOLOMON.

Sol. Oh! thou careless varlet! I disown you! What an accident might have happened! and how you have terrified his Excellency! But I beg pardon, [*Bows.*] His Right Honourable Excellency, the Count, requests your—

Bar. We come. [*Exit with MRS. HALLER.*

Char. Ha! ha! ha! Why, Mr. Solomon, you seem to have a hopeful pupil.

Sol. Ah! sirrah!

Char. But, Mr. Solomon, why were you not nimble enough to have saved his young lordship?

Sol. Not in time, my sweet Miss. Besides, mercy on us! I should have sunk like a lump of lead: and I happened to have a letter of consequence in my pocket, which would have been made totally illegible; a letter from Constantinople, written by Chevalier—What's his name? [*Draws a letter from his pocket, and putting it up again directly, drops it. PETER takes it up slyly and unobserved.*] It contains momentous matter, I assure you. The world will be astonished when it comes to light; and not a soul will suppose that old Solomon had a finger in the pye.

Char. No, that I believe.

Sol. But I must go and see to the cellar. Miss, your most obedient servant. [*Exit.*

Char. [*With pride.*] Your servant, Mr. Solomon.

Pet. Here's the letter from Constantinople. I wonder what it can be about. Now for it! [*Opens it.*

Char. Aye let's have it.

Pet. [*Reads.*] *If so be you say so, I'll never work for you never no more. Considering as how your Sunday waistcoat has been turned three times, it doesn't look amiss, and I've charged as little as any tailor*

of 'em all. You say I must pay for the buckram ; but I say, I'll be damn'd if I do. So no more at present from your loving nephew,

TIMOTHY TWIST.

From Constantinople ! why cousin Tim writ it.

Char. Cousin Tim ! Who is he ?

Pet. Good lack ! Don't you know cousin Tim ? Why, he's one of the best tailor's in all—

Char. A tailor ! No, sir, I do not know him. My father was state coachman, and wore his highness's livery. *[Exit.*

Pet. [Mimicking.] “ My father was state coachman, and wore his Highness's livery”—Well, and cousin Tim could have made his Highness's livery, if you go to that. State coachman, indeed ! [Going.

Enter SOLOMON.

Sol. Peter, you ninny, stay where you are. Is that chattering girl gone ? Didn't I tell you we would have a practice of our dance ? they are all ready on the lawn. Mark me ; I represent the Count, and you the Baron.

[Exit, with affected dignity. PETER follows, mimicking.

SCENE IV.

The Lawn.—Seats placed.—Rustic music.—Dancers are discovered as ready to perform.

SOLOMON and PETER enter, and seat themselves.

A Dance, in which the Dancers pay their reverence to SOLOMON and PETER as they pass. At the end, SOLOMON and PETER strut off before the Dancers.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The Skirts of the Park and Lodge, &c. as before. The STRANGER is discovered on a seat, reading.

Enter FRANCIS.

Fra. Sir, sir, dinner is ready.

Stra. I want no dinner.

Fra. I've got something good.

Stra. Eat it yourself.

Fra. You are not hungry?

Stra. No.

[*Rises.*

Fra. Nor I. The heat takes away all appetite.

Stra. Yes.

Fra. I'll put it by; perhaps at night—

Stra. Perhaps.

Fra. Dear sir, dare I speak?

Stra. Speak.

Fra. You have done a noble action.

Stra. What?

Fra. You have saved a fellow creature's life.

Stra. Peace.

Fra. Do you know who he was?

Stra. No.

Fra. The only son of Count Wintersen.

Stra. Immaterial.

Fra. A gentleman, by report, worthy and benevolent as yourself.

Stra. [*Angry.*] Silence! Dare you flatter me?

Fra. As I look to Heaven for mercy, I speak from my heart. When I observe how you are doing good around you, how you are making every individual's wants your own, and are yet yourself unhappy, alas! my heart bleeds for you.

Stra. I thank you, Francis. I can only thank you. Yet share this consolation with me:—my sufferings are unmerited.

Fra. My poor master!

Stra. Have you forgotten what the old man said this morning? “‘There is another and a better world!’” Oh, ’twas true. Then let us hope with fervency, and yet endure with patience?—What’s here?

Enter CHARLOTTE, from the Park gate.

Char. I presume, sir, you are the strange gentleman that drew my young master out of the water?—[*The STRANGER reads.*] Or [*To FRANCIS.*] are you he? [*FRANCIS makes a wry face.*] Are the creatures both dumb? [*Looks at them by turns.*] Surely, old Solomon has fixed two statues here, by way of ornament; for of any use there is no sign. [*Approaches FRANCIS.*] No, this is alive, and breathes; yes, and moves its eyes. [*Bawls in his ear.*] Good friend!

Fra. I’m not deaf.

Char. No, nor dumb, I perceive at last.—Is yon lifeless thing your master?

Fra. That honest, silent gentleman is my master.

Char. The same that drew the young Count out of the water?

Fra. The same.

Char. [*To the STRANGER.*] Sir, my master and mistress, the Count and Countess, present their respectful compliments, and request the honour of your company at a family supper this evening.

Stra. I shall not come.

Char. But you’ll scarce send such an uncivil answer as this. The Count is overpowered with gratitude. You saved his son’s life.

Stra. I did it willingly.

Char. And won’t accept of “I thank you,” in return.

Stra. No.

Char. You really are cruel, sir, I must tell you. There are three of us ladies at the Castle, and we are all dying with curiosity to know who you are. [*Exit STRANGER.*] The master is crabbed enough, however, Let me try what I can make of the man. Pray, sir—[*FRANCIS turns his back to her.*—The beginning promises little enough. Friend, why won't you look at me.

Fra. I like to look at green trees better than green eyes.

Char. Green eyes, you monster! Who told you that my eyes were green? Let me tell you there have been sonnets made on my eyes, before now.

Fra. Glad to hear it.

Char. To the point then at once. What is your master?

Fra. A man.

Char. I surmised as much. But what's his name?

Fra. The same as his father's.

Char. Not unlikely;—and his father was—

Fra. Married.

Char. To whom?

Fra. To a woman.

Char. [*Enraged.*] I'll tell you what; who your master is I see I shall not learn, and I don't care; but I know what you are.

Fra. Well, what am I?

Char. A bear! [*Exit.*]

Fra. Thank you! Now to see how habit and example corrupt one's manners. I am naturally the civilest spoken fellow in the world to the pretty prattling rogues; yes, following my master's humour, I've rudely driven this wench away. I must have a peep at her though. [*Looking towards the Park gate.*]

Enter STRANGER.

Stra. Is that woman gone?

Fra. Yes.

Stra. Francis !

Fra. Sir.

Stra. We must be gone too.

Fra. But whither ?

Stra. I don't care.

Fra. I'll attend you.

Stra. To any place ?

Fra. To death.

Stra. Heav'n grant it—to me, at least ! There is peace.

Fra. Peace is every where. Let the storm rage without, if the heart be but at rest. Yet I think we are very well where we are : the situation is inviting ; and nature lavish of her beauties and of her bounties too.

Stra. But I am not a wild beast, to be stared at, and sent for as a shew. Is it fit I should be ?

Fra. Another of your interpretations ! That a man, the life of whose only son you have saved, should invite you to his house, seems to me not very unnatural.

Stra. I will not be invited to any house.

Fra. For once, methinks, you might submit. You'll not be asked a second time.

Stra. Proud wretches ! They believe the most essential service is requited, if one may but have the honour of sitting at their table. Let us begone.

Fra. Yet hold, sir ! This bustle will soon be over. Used to the town, the Count and his party will soon be tired of simple nature, and you will again be freed from observation.

Stra. Not from your's.

Fra. This is too much. Do I deserve your doubts ?

Stra. Am I in the wrong ?

Fra. You are indeed !

Stra. Francis, my servant, you are my only friend.

Fra. That title makes amends for all.

Stra. But look, Francis ; there are uniforms and gay dresses in the walk again. No, I must be gone. Here I'll stay no longer.

Fra. Well then, I'll tie up my bundle.

Stra. The sooner the better ! They come this way. Now must I shut myself in my hovel, and lose this fine breeze. Nay, if they be your highbred class of all, they may have impudence enough to walk into my chamber. Francis, I shall lock the door.

[Goes into the Lodge, locks the door, and fastens the shutters.]

Fra. And I'll be your centinel.

Stra. Very well.

Fra. Now should these people be as inquisitive as their maid, I must summon my whole stock of impertinence. But their questions and my answers need little study. They can learn nothing of the Stranger from me ; for the best of all possible reasons—I know nothing myself.

Enter BARON and COUNTESS.

Countess. There is a strange face. The servant probably.

Bar. Friend, can we speak to your master ?

Fra. No.

Bar. Only for a few minutes.

Fra. He has locked himself in his room.

Countess. Tell him a lady waits for him.

Fra. Then he's sure not to come.

Countess. Does he hate our sex ?

Fra. He hates the whole human race, but woman particularly.

Countess. And why ?

Fra. He may perhaps have been deceived.

Countess. This is not very courteous.

Fra. My master is not over courteous : but when

inhabitants of an ideal world. How could you introduce her to the circle we live in? You surely would not attempt to present her to—

Bar. Object as you will—my answer is—*I love.* Sister, you see a man before you, who—

Countess. Who wants a wife.

Bar. No; who has deliberately poised advantage against disadvantage; domestic ease and comfort against the false gaieties of fashion. I can withdraw into the country. I need no honours to make my tenants happy; and my heart will teach me to make their happiness my own. With such a wife as this, children who resemble her, and fortune enough to spread comfort around me, what would the soul of man have more?

Countess. This is all vastly fine. I admire your plan; only you seem to have forgotten one trifling circumstance.

Bar. And that is—

Countess. Whether Mrs. Haller will have you or not.

Bar. There, sister, I just want your assistance.—
[*Seizing her hand.*] Good Henrietta!

Countess. Well, here's my hand. I'll do all I can for you. St!—We had near been overheard. They are coming. Be patient and obedient.

Enter COUNT, and MRS. HALLER, leaning on his arm.

Count. Upon my word, Mrs. Haller, you are a nimble walker: I should be sorry to run a race with you.

Mrs. H. Custom, my lord. You need only take the same walk every day for a month.

Count. Yes; if I wanted to resemble my greyhounds.—But what said the Stranger?

Countess. He gave Charlotte a flat refusal; and

you see his door, and even his shutters are closed against us.

Count. What an unaccountable being! But it won't do. I must show my gratitude one way or other. Steinfort, we will take the ladies home, and then you shall try once again to see him. You can talk to these oddities better than I can.

Bar. If you wish it, with all my heart.

Count. Thank you, thank you. Come, ladies: come Mrs. Haller. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A close walk in the Garden.

Enter COUNTESS, and MRS. HALLER.

Countess. Well, Mrs. Haller, how do you like the man that just now left us?

Mrs. H. Who?

Countess. My brother.

Mrs. H. He deserves to be your brother.

Countess. [*Curtseying.*] Your most obedient! That shall be written in my pocket-book.

Mrs. H. Without flattery then, madam, he appears to be most amiable.

Countess. Good!—And a handsome man?

Mrs. H. [*With indifference.*] Oh, yes.

Countess. “Oh, yes!” It sounded almost like “Oh no!” But I must tell you, that he looks upon you to be a handsome woman [*Mrs. HALLER smiles.*] You make no reply to this?

Mrs. H. What shall I reply? Derision never fell from your lips; and I am little calculated to support it.

he sees a chance of saving a fellow creature's life, he'll attempt it at the hazard of his own.

Bar. You are right. Now hear the reason of our visit. The wife and brother-in-law of the man, whose child your master has saved, wish to acknowledge their obligations to him.

Fra. That he dislikes. He only wishes to live unnoticed.

Countess. He appears to be unfortunate.

Fra. Appears!

Countess. An affair of honour, perhaps, or some unhappy attachment may have—

Fra. They may.

Countess. Be this as it may, I wish to know who he is.

Fra. So do I.

Countess. What! don't you know him yourself?

Fra. Oh! I know him well enough. I mean his real self—His heart—his soul—his worth—his honour!—Perhaps you think one knows a man, when one is acquainted with his name and person.

Countess. 'Tis well said, friend; you please me much. And now I should like to know you. Who are you?

Fra. Your humble servant. [Exit.

Countess. This is affectation! A desire to appear singular! Every one wishes to make himself distinguished. One sails round the world; another creeps into a hovel.

Bar. And the man apes his master!

Countess. Come, brother, let us seek the Count. He and Mrs. Haller turned into the lawn— [Going.

Bar. Stay. First a word or two, sister. I am in love.

Countess. For the hundredth time.

Bar. For the first time in my life.

Countess. I wish you joy.

Bar. Till now you have evaded my inquiries. Who is she? I beseech you, sister, be serious. There is a time for all things.

Countess. Bless us! Why you look as if you were going to raise a spirit. Don't fix your eyes so earnestly. Well, if I am to be serious, I obey. I do not know who Mrs. Haller is, as I have already told you; but what I do know of her, shall not be concealed from you. It may now be three years ago, when, one evening, about twilight, a lady was announced, who wished to speak to me in private. Mrs. Haller appeared with all that grace and modesty, which have enchanted you. Her features at that moment, bore keener marks of the sorrow and confusion which have since settled into gentle melancholy. She threw herself at my feet; and besought me to save a wretch who was on the brink of despair. She told me she had heard much of my benevolence, and offered herself as a servant to attend me. I endeavoured to dive into the cause of her sufferings, but in vain. She concealed her secret; yet opening to me more and more each day a heart, chosen by virtue as her temple, and an understanding improved by the most refined attainments. She no longer remained my servant, but became my friend; and, by her own desire, has ever since resided here. [*Curtseying.*] Brother, I have done.

Bar. Too little to satisfy my curiosity; yet enough to make me realise my project. Sister, lend me your aid—I would marry her.

Countess. You!

Bar. I.

Countess. Baron Steinfort.

Bar. For shame! If I understand you!

Countess. Not so harsh, and not so hasty! Those great sentiments of contempt of inequality in rank are very fine in a romance; but we happen not to be

Countess. As little as you are calculated to be the cause of it. No ; I was in earnest.—Now ?

Mrs. H. You confuse me !—But why should I play the prude ? I will own there was a time, when I thought myself handsome. 'Tis past. Alas ! the enchanting beauties of a female countenance arise from peace of mind—The look, which captivates an honourable man, must be reflected from a noble soul.

Countess. Then Heaven grant my bosom may ever hold as pure a heart, as now those eyes bear witness lives in yours !

Mrs. H. [*With sudden wildness.*] Oh ! Heaven forbid !

Countess. [*Astonished.*] How !

Mrs. H. [*Checking her tears.*] Spare me ! I am a wretch. The sufferings of three years can give me no claim to your friendship—No, not even to your compassion. Oh ! spare me ! [*Going.*

Countess. Stay, Mrs. Haller. For the first time, I beg your confidence.—My brother loves you.

Mrs. H. [*Starting, and gazing full in the face of the COUNTESS.*] For mirth, too much—for earnest, too mournful !

Countess. I revere that modest blush. Discover to me who you are. You risk nothing. Pour all your griefs into a sister's bosom. Am I not kind ? and can I not be silent ?

Mrs. H. Alas ! But a frank reliance on a generous mind is the greatest sacrifice to be offered by true repentance. This sacrifice I will offer. [*Hesitating.*] Did you never hear—Pardon me—Did you never hear—Oh ! how shocking it is to unmask a deception, which alone has recommended me to your regard ! But it must be so.—Madam—Fie, Adelaide ! does pride become you ? Did you never hear of the Countess Waldbourg ?

Countess. I think I did hear, at the neighbouring court, of such a creature. She plunged an honour-

able husband into misery. She ran away with a villain.

Mrs. H. She did indeed. [*Falls at the feet of the Countess.*] Do not cast me from you.

Countess. For Heaven's sake! You are—

Mrs. H. I am that wretch.

Countess. [*Turning from her with horror.*] Ha!—Begone! [*Going. Her heart draws her back.*] Yet, she is unfortunate: she is unfriended! Her image is repentance—Her life the proof—She has wept her fault in her three years agony. Be still a while remorseless prejudice, and let the genuine feelings of my soul avow—they do not truly honour virtue, who can insult the erring heart that would return to her sanctuary. [*Looking with sorrow on her.*] Rise, I beseech you, rise! My husband and my brother may surprize us. I promise to be silent.

[*Raising her.*]

Mrs. H. Yes, you will be silent—But, Oh! conscience! conscience! thou never wilt be silent. [*Clasping her hands.*] Do not cast me from you.

Countess. Never! Your lonely life, your silent anguish and contrition, may at length atone your crime. And never shall you want an asylum, where your penitence may lament your loss. Your crime was youth and inexperience; your heart never was, never could be concerned in it.

Mrs. H. Oh! spare me! My conscience never martyrs me so horribly, as when I catch my base thoughts in search of an excuse! No, nothing can palliate my guilt; and the only just consolation left me, is, to acquit the man I wronged, and own I erred without a cause of fair complaint.

Countess. And this is the mark of true repentance. Alas! my friend, when superior sense, recommended too by superior charms of person, assail a young, though wedded—

Mrs. H. Ah ! not even that mean excuse is left me. In all that merits admiration, respect, and love, he was far, far beneath my husband. But to attempt to account for my strange infatuation—I cannot bear it. I thought my husband's manner grew colder to me. 'Tis true I knew, that his expences, and his confidence in deceitful friends, had embarrassed his means, and clouded his spirits; yet I thought he denied me pleasures and amusements still within our reach. My vanity was mortified ! My confidence not courted. The serpent tongue of my seducer promised every thing. But never could such arguments avail, till, assisted by forged letters, and the treachery of a servant, whom I most confided in, he fixed my belief that my lord was false, and that all the coldness I complained of was disgust to me, and love for another ; all his home retrenchments but the means of satisfying a rival's luxury. Maddenned with this conviction, (conviction it was, for artifice was most ingenious in its proof,) I left my children—father—husband—to follow—a villain.

Countess. But, with such a heart, my friend could not remain long in her delusion ?

Mrs. H. Long enough to make sufficient penitence impossible. 'Tis true that in a few weeks the delirium was at an end. Oh, what were my sensations when the mist dispersed before my eyes ! I called for my husband, but in vain !—I listened for the prattle of my children, but in vain !

Countess. [*Embracing her.*] Here here, on this bosom only shall your future tears be shed ; and may I, dear sufferer, make you again familiar with hope !

Mrs. H. Oh ! impossible !

Countess. Have you never heard of your children ?

Mrs. H. Never.

Countess. We must endeavour to gain some account of them. We must—Hold! my husband and my brother! Oh my poor brother! I had quite forgotten him. Quick, dear Mrs. Haller, wipe your eyes. Let us meet them.

Mrs. H. Madam, I'll follow. Allow me a moment to compose myself!—[*Exit* COUNTESS.] I pause!—Oh! yes—to compose myself! [*Ironically.*] She little thinks it is but to gain one solitary moment to vent my soul's remorse. Once the purpose of my unsettled mind was self-destruction; Heaven knows how I have sued for hope and resignation. I did trust my prayers were heard—Oh! spare me further trial! I feel, I feel, my heart and brain can bear no more. [*Exit.*]

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Skirts of the Park, Lodge, &c. as before.—A Table, spread with fruits, &c.

FRANCIS discovered placing the supper.

Fra. I know he loves to have his early supper in the fresh air; and, while he sups, not that I believe any thing can amuse him, yet I will try my little Savoyards' pretty voices. I have heard him speak as if he had loved music. [*Music without.*] Oh, here they are.

Enter ANNETTE and CLAUDINE, playing on their guitars.

*Ann. To welcome mirth and harmless glee,
We rambling minstrels, blythe and free,
With song the laughing hours beguile,
And wear a never-fading smile:*

Where'er we roam

We find a home,

And greeting, to reward our toil.

*Clau. No anxious griefs disturb our rest,
Nor busy cares annoy our breast;
Fearless we sink in soft repose,
While night her sable mantle throws.*

With grateful lay

Hail rising day,

That rosy health and peace bestows.

During the Duet, the STRANGER looks from the Lodge window, and at the conclusion he comes out.

Stra. What mummary is this?

Fra. I hoped it might amuse you, sir.

Stra. Amuse me—fool!

Fra. Well then, I wished to amuse myself a little. I don't think my recreations are so very numerous.

Stra. That's true my poor fellow; indeed they are not. Let them go on.—I'll listen.

Fra. But to please you, poor master, I fear it must be a sadder strain. Annette, have you none but these cheerful songs?

Ann. O, plenty. If you are dolefully given we can be as sad as night. I'll sing you an air Mrs. Haller taught me the first year she came to the Castle.

Fra. Mrs. Haller! I should like to hear that.

Ann. *I have a silent sorrow here,
A grief I'll ne'er impart ;
It breathes no sigh, it sheds no tear,
But it consumes my heart ;
This cherish'd woe, this lov'd despair,
My lot for ever be,
So, my soul's lord, the pangs I bear
Be never known by thee !*

*And when pale characters of death
Shall mark this altered cheek,
When my poor wasted trembling breath
My life's last hope would speak ;
I shall not raise my eyes to Heav'n,
Nor mercy ask for me,
My soul despairs to be forgiv'n,
Unpardon'd love by thee.*

Stra. [*Surprised and moved.*] Oh ! I have heard that air before, but 'twas with other words. Francis, share our supper with your friends—I need none.

[*Enters the Lodge.*

Fra. So I feared. Well, my pretty favourites, here are refreshments. So, disturbed again. Now will this gentleman call for more music, and make my master mad. Return when you observe this man is gone.—[*Exeunt ANNETTE and CLAUDINE.—FRANCIS sits and eats.*—I was in hopes, that I might at least eat my supper peaceably in the open air ; but they follow at our heels like blood-hounds.

Enter BARON.

Bar. My good friend, I must speak to your master.

Fra. Can't serve you.

Bar. Why not?

Fra. It's forbidden.

Bar. [*Offers money.*] There! announce me.

Fra. Want no money.

Bar. Well, only announce me then.

Fra. I will announce you, sir ; but it won't avail ! I shall be abused, and you rejected. However, we can but try. [*Going.*]

Bar. I only ask half a minute. [*FRANCIS goes into the Lodge.*] But when he comes, how am I to treat him ? I never encountered a misanthrope before. I have heard of instructions as to conduct in society ; but how I am to behave towards a being who loathes the whole world, and his own existence, I have never learned.

Enter the STRANGER.

Stra. Now ; what's your will ?

Bar. I beg pardon, sir, for—[*Suddenly recognizing him.*] Charles !

Stra. Steinfort !

Bar. Is it really you, my dear friend ?

Stra. It is.

Bar. Merciful Heavens ! How you are altered !

Stra. The hand of misery lies heavy on me.—But how came you here ? What want you ?

Bar. Strange ! Here was I ruminating how to address this mysterious recluse : he appears, and proves to be my old and dearest friend.

Stra. Then you were not in search of me, nor knew that I lived here ?

Bar. As little as I know who lives on the summit of Caucasus. You this morning saved the life of my brother-in-law's only son : a grateful family wishes to behold you in its circle. You refused my sister's messenger ; therefore to give more weight to the invitation, I was deputed to be the bearer of it. And thus has fortune restored to me a friend, whom my heart has so long missed, and whom my heart just now so much requires.

Stra. Yes, I am your friend, your sincere friend. You are a true man, an uncommon man. Towards you my heart is still the same. But if this assurance

be of any value to you—go—leave me—and return no more.

Bar. Stay! All that I see and hear of you is inexplicable. 'Tis you; but these, alas! are not the features which once enchanted every female bosom, beamed gaiety through all society, and won you friends before your lips were opened! Why do you avert your face? Is the sight of a friend become hateful? Or do you fear, that I should read in your eye what passes in your soul? Where is that open look of fire, which at once penetrated into every heart, and revealed your own?

Stra. [*With asperity.*] My look penetrate into every heart!—Ha! ha! ha!

Bar. Oh, Heavens! Rather may I never hear you laugh, than in such a tone!—For Heaven's sake, tell me, Charles, tell me, I conjure you, what has happened to you?

Stra. Things that happen every day; occurrences heard of in every street. Steinfort, if I am not to hate you, ask me not another question. If I am to love you, leave me.

Bar. Oh, Charles! awake the faded ideas of past joys. Feel, that a friend is near. Recollect the days we passed in Hungary, when we wandered arm in arm upon the banks of the Danube, while nature opened our hearts, and made us enarmoured of benevolence and friendship. In those blessed moments you gave me this seal as a pledge of your regard. Do you remember it?

Stra. Yes.

Bar. Am I since that time become less worthy of your confidence?

Stra. No!

Bar. Charles! it grieves me that I am thus compelled to enforce my rights upon you. Do you know this scar?

Stra. Comrade! friend! It received and resisted

nately to avoid those thanks, as to make the kindness a burthen, is affectation.

Stra. Leave me! leave me! Every one tries to form a circle of which he may be the centre. As long as there remains a bird in these woods to greet the rising sun with its melody, I shall court no other society.

Bar. Do as you please to-morrow; but give me your company this evening.

Stra. [*Resolutely.*] No!

Bar. Not though it were in your power, by this single visit, to secure the happiness of your friend for life?

Stra. [*Starting.*] Ha! then I must—But how?—

Bar. You shall sue in my behalf to Mrs. Haller—You have the talent of persuasion.

Stra. I! my dear Steinfort!

Bar. The happiness or misery of your friend depends upon it. I'll contrive that you shall speak to her alone. Will you?

Stra. I will; but upon one condition.

Bar. Name it.

Stra. That you will allow me to be gone to-morrow, and not endeavour to detain me.

Bar. Go! Whither?

Stra. No matter! promise this, or I will not come.

Bar. Well, I do promise. Come.

Stra. I have directions to give my servant.

Bar. In half an hour then we shall expect you. Remember, you have given your word.

Stra. I have. [*Exit BARON.—The STRANGER walks up and down thoughtful and melancholy.*—Francis!

Enter FRANCIS.

Fra. Sir!

Stra. Why are you out of the way?

Fra. Sir, I came when I heard you call.

Stra. I shall leave this place to-morrow.

Fra. With all my heart.

Stra. Perhaps to go into another land.

Fra. With all my heart again.

Stra. Perhaps into another quarter of the globe.

Fra. With all my heart still, into which quarter?

Stra. Wherever Heaven directs! Away! away! from Europe! From this cultivated moral lazaret! Do you hear, Francis? To-morrow early.

Fra. Very well!

Stra. Come here, come here first, I have an errand for you. Hire that carriage in the village; drive to the town hard by; you may be back by sun-set. I shall give you a letter to a widow who lives there. With her you will find two children. They are mine.

Fra. [*Astonished.*] Your children, sir!

Stra. Take them and bring them hither.

Fra. Your children, sir!

Stra. Yes, mine! Is it so very inconceivable.

Fra. That I should have been three years in your service, and never have heard them mentioned is somewhat strange.

Stra. Pshaw!

Fra. You have been married then?

Stra. Go and prepare for our journey.

Fra. That I can do in five minutes. [*Going.*

Stra. I shall come and write the letter directly.

Fra. Very well, sir. [*Exit.*

Stra. Yes, I'll take them with me. I'll accustom myself to the sight of them. The innocents! they shall not be poisoned by the refinements of society. Rather let them hunt their daily sustenance upon some desert island with their bow and arrow; or creep, like torpid Hottentots, into a corner, and stare at each other. Better to do nothing than to do evil. Fool that I was, to be prevailed upon once more to exhibit myself among these apes! What a ridiculous figure shall I be! and in the capacity of a suitor too! Pshaw! he cannot be serious! 'Tis but a friendly artifice to draw me from my solitude. Why did I promise him? Yes, my sufferings have been many; and to oblige a friend, why should I hesitate to add another painful hour to the etched callender of my life! I'll go. I'll go. [*Exit.*

the stroke aimed at my life. I have not forgotten it, Alas ! you knew not what a present you then made me.

Bar. Speak then, I beseech you.

Stra. You cannot help me.

Bar. Then I can mourn with you.

Stra. That I hate. Besides, I cannot weep.

Bar. Then give me words instead of tears. Both relieve the heart.

Stra. Relieve the heart ! My heart is like a close-shut sepulchre. Let what is within it, moulder and decay.—Why, why open the wretched charnel house to spread a pestilence around ?

Bar. How horrid are your looks ! For shame ! A man like you thus to crouch beneath the chance of fortune !

Stra. Steinfort ! I did think, that the opinion of all mankind was alike indifferent to me ; but I feel that it is not so. My friend, you shall not quit me without learning how I have been robbed of every joy which life afforded. Listen : much misery may be contained in a few words. Attracted by my native country, I quitted you and the service. What pleasing pictures did I draw of a life employed in improving society, and diffusing happiness ! I fixed on Cassel to be my abode. All went on admirably. I found friends. At length, too, I found a wife ; a lovely innocent creature, scarce sixteen years of age. Oh ! how I loved her ! She bore me a son and a daughter. Both were endowed by nature with the beauty of their mother. Ask me not how I loved my wife and children ! Yes, then, then I was really happy. [*Wiping his eyes.*] Ha ! a tear ! I could not have believed it. Welcome, old friends ! 'Twas long since we have known each other. Well, my story is nearly ended. One of my friends for whom I had become engaged, treacherously lost me more than half my fortune. This hurt me. I was obliged to retrench my expenses. Contentment needs but little. I for-

gave him. Another friend—a villain ! to whom I was attached heart and soul ; whom I had assisted with my means, and promoted by my interest, this fiend ! seduced my wife, and bore her from me. Tell me, sir, is this enough to justify my hatred of mankind, and palliate my seclusion from the world ?—Kings—laws—tyranny—or guilt can but imprison me, or kill me. But O God ! O God ! Oh ! what are chains or death, compared to the tortures of a deceived yet doating husband.

Bar. To lament the loss of a faithless wife is madness.

Stra. Call it what you please—say what you please—I love her still.

Bar. And where is she ?

Stra. I know not, nor do I wish to know.

Bar. And your children ?

Stra. I left them at a small town hard by.

Bar. But why did you not keep your children with you ? they would have amused you in many a dreary hour.

Stra. Amused me ! Oh, yes ! while their likeness to their mother would every hour remind me of my past happiness ! No. For three years I have never seen them. I hate that any human creature should be near me, young or old ! Had not ridiculous habits made a servant necessary, I should long since have discharged him ; though he is not the worst among the bad.

Bar. Such too often are the consequences of great alliances. Therefore Charles I have resolved to take a wife from a lower rank of life.

Stra. You marry !—Ha ! ha ! ha !

Bar. You shall see her. She is in the house where you are expected. Come with me.

Stra. What ! I mix again with the world !

Bar. To do a generous action without requiring thanks is noble and praise-worthy. But so obsti-

SCENE II.

*The Antichamber.**Enter CHARLOTTE.*

Char. No, indeed, my lady! If you choose to bury yourself in the country, I shall take my leave. I am not calculated for a country life. And, to sum up all, when I think of this Mrs. Haller—

Enter SOLOMON.

Sol. [*Overhearing her last words.*] What of Mrs. Haller, my sweet Miss?

Char. Why, Mr. Solomon, who is Mrs. Haller? You know every thing; you hear every thing.

Sol. I have received no letters from any part of Europe on the subject, Miss.

Char. But who is to blame? The Count and Countess. She dines with them; and at this very moment is drinking tea with them. Is this proper?

Sol. By no means.

Char. Should'nt a Count and Countess, in all their actions, show a certain degree of pride and pomposity?

Sol. To be sure! To be sure they should!

Char. No, I wont submit to it. I'll tell her ladyship, when I dress her to-morrow, that either Mrs. Haller or I must quit the house.

Sol. [*Seeing the BARON.*] St!

Enter BARON.

Bar. Didn't I hear Mrs. Haller's name here?

Sol. [*Confused.*] Why yes—yes—we—we—

Bar. Charlotte, tell my sister I wish to see her as soon as the tea-table is removed.

Char. [*Aside to SOLOMON.*] Either she or I go, that I'm determined. [*Exit.*

Bar. May I ask what it was you were saying?

Sol. Why please your Honourable Lordship, we were talking here and there—this and that—

Bar. I almost begin to suspect some secret.

Sol. Secret! Heaven forbid! Mercy on us! No! I should have had letters on the subject if there had been a secret.

Bar. Well then, since it was no secret, I presume I may know your conversation.

Sol. You do us great honour, my lord. Why then, at first, we were making a few common-place observations. Miss Charlotte remarked that we had all our faults. I said "Yes." Soon after I remarked that the best persons in the world were not without their weaknesses. She said, "Yes."

Bar. If you referred to Mrs. Haller's faults and weaknesses, I am desirous to hear more.

Sol. Sure enough, sir, Mrs. Haller is an excellent woman! but she's not an angel for all that. I am an old faithful servant to his Excellency the Count, and therefore it is my duty to speak, when any thing is done disadvantageous to his interest.

Bar. Well!

Sol. For instance, now; his Excellency may think he has at least some score of dozens of the old six-and-twenty hock. Mercy on us! there are not ten dozen bottles left; and not a drop has gone down my throat, I'll swear.

Bar. [*Smiling.*] Mrs. Haller has not drank it I suppose?

Sol. Not she herself, for she never drinks wine. But if any body be ill in the village, any poor woman lying in, away goes a bottle of the six-and-twenty! Innumerable are the times that I've reprov'd her; but she always answers me snappishly, that she will be responsible for it.

Bar. So will I, Mr. Solomon.

Sol. Oh! with all my heart, your Honourable Lordship. It makes no difference to me. I had the care of the cellar twenty years, and can safely take my oath, that I never gave the poor a single drop in the whole course of my trust.

Bar. How extraordinary is this woman!

Sol. Extraordinary! One can make nothing of her. To-day the vicar's wife is not good enough for her. To-morrow, you may see her sitting with all the women of the village. To be sure, she and I agree pretty well; for, between me and your Honourable Lordship, she has cast an eye upon my son Peter.

Bar. Has she?

Sol. Yes—Peter's no fool, I assure you. The schoolmaster is teaching him to write. Would your Honourable Lordship please to see a specimen? I'll go for his copy-book. He makes his pot-hooks capitally.

Bar. Another time, another time. Good bye for the present, Mr. Solomon. [*SOLOMON bows without attempting to go.*] Good day Mr. Solomon.

Sol. [*Not understanding the hint.*] Your Honourable Lordship's most obedient servant.

Bar. Mr. Solomon I wish to be alone.

Sol. As your Lordship commands. If the time should seem long in my absence, and your lordship wishes to hear the newest news from the seat of war, you need only send for old Solomon. I have letters from Leghorn, Cape-horn, and every known part of the habitable globe. [*Exit.*]

Bar. Tedious old fool! yet hold. Did he not speak in praise of Mrs. Haller? Pardoned be his rage for news and politics.

Enter COUNTESS.

Well, sister, have you spoken to her?

Countess. I have: and if you do not steer for another haven, you will be doomed to drive upon the ocean for ever.

Bar. Is she married?

Countess. I don't know.

Bar. Is she of a good family?

Countess. I can't tell.

Bar. Does she dislike me?

Countess. Excuse my making a reply.

Bar. I thank you for your sisterly affection, and the explicitness of your communications. Luckily, I placed little reliance on either; and have found a friend who will save your ladyship all further trouble.

Countess. A friend!

Bar. Yes. The Stranger who saved your son's life this morning proves to be my intimate friend.

Countess. What's his name?

Bar. I don't know.

Countess. Is he of a good family?

Bar. I can't tell.

Countess. Will he come hither?

Bar. Excuse my making a reply.

Countess. Well, the retort is fair—but insufferable.

Bar. You can't object to the *Da Capo* of your own composition.

Enter COUNT and MRS. HALLER.

Count. Zounds! do you think I am Xenocrates; or like the poor sultan with marble legs? There you leave me *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Haller, as if my heart were a mere flint. So you prevailed, brother. The Stranger will come then it seems.

Bar. I expect him every minute.

Count. I'm glad to hear it. One companion more, however. In the country we never can have too many.

Bar. This gentleman will not exactly be an addition to your circle, for he leaves this place to-morrow.

Count. But he won't, I think. Now, Lady Wintersen, summon all your charms. There is no art in conquering us poor devils; but this strange man, who does not care a doit for you all together, is worth your efforts. Try your skill. I shan't be jealous.

Countess. I allow the conquest to be worth the trouble. But what Mrs. Haller has not been able to effect in three months, ought not to be attempted by me.

Mrs. H. [Jocosely.] Oh, yes, madam. He has

given me no opportunity of trying the force of my charms, for I have never once happened to see him.

Count. Then he's a blockhead; and you an idler.

Sol. [*Without.*] This way, sir! This way!

Enter SOLOMON.

Sol. The Stranger begs leave to have the honour—

Count. Welcome! Welcome. [*Exit SOLOMON.*

[Turns to meet the STRANGER, whom he conducts in by the hand.]

My dear sir—Lady Wintersen—Mrs. Haller—

[MRS. HALLER, as soon as she sees the STRANGER, shrieks, and swoons in the arms of the BARON. The STRANGER casts a look at her, and struck with astonishment and horror, rushes out of the room. The BARON and COUNTESS bear MRS. HALLER off; COUNT following, in great surprise.]

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The Antichamber.

Enter BARON.

Bar. Oh! deceitful hope! Thou phantom of future happiness! To thee have I stretched out my arms, and thou hast vanished into air! Wretched Steinfort! The mystery is solved. She is the wife of my friend! I cannot myself be happy; but I may, perhaps, be able to reunite two lovely souls, whom cruel fate has severed. Ha! they are here. I must propose it instantly.

Enter COUNTESS *and* MRS. HALLER.

Countess. Into the garden, my dear friend ! Into the air !

Mrs. H. I am quite well. Do not alarm yourselves on my account.

Bar. Madam, pardon my intrusion ; but to lose a moment may be fatal. He means to quit the country to-morrow. We must devise means to reconcile you to—the Stranger.

Mrs. H. How, my lord ! You seem acquainted with my history ?

Bar. I am. Waldbourg has been my friend ever since we were boys. We served together from the rank of cadet. We have been separated seven years. Chance brought us this day together, and his heart was open to me.

Mrs. H. Now do I feel what it is to be in the presence of an honest man, when I dare not meet his eye. *[Hides her face.]*

Bar. If sincere repentance, if years without reproach, do not give us a title to man's forgiveness, what must we expect hereafter ? No, lovely penitent ! your contrition is complete. Error for a moment wrested from slumbering virtue the dominion of your heart : but she awoke, and with a look, banished her enemy for ever. I know my friend. He has the firmness of a man ; but, with it, the gentlest feelings of your sex. I hasten to him. — With the fire of pure disinterested friendship will I enter on this work ; that, when I look back upon my past life, I may derive from this good action consolation in disappointment, and even resignation in despair. *[Going.]*

Mrs. H. Oh, stay ! What would you do ? No ! never ! My husband's honour is sacred to me. I love him unutterably ; but never, never can I be his wife again ; even if he were generous enough to pardon me.

Bar. Madam! Can you, Countess, be serious?

Mrs. H. Not that title, I beseech you! I am not a child, who wishes to avoid deserved punishment. What were my penitence, if I hoped advantage from it beyond the consciousness of atonement for past offence?

Countess. But if your husband himself?—

Mrs. H. Oh! he will not! he cannot! And let him rest assured I never would replace my honour at the expence of his.

Bar. He still loves you.

Mrs. H. Loves me! Then he must not—No—he must purify his heart from a weakness which would degrade him!

Bar. Incomparable woman! I go to my friend—perhaps for the last time! Have you not one word to send him?

Mrs. H. Yes, I have two requests to make. Often when, in excess of grief, I have despaired of every consolation, I have thought I should be easier if I might behold my husband once again, acknowledge my injustice to him, and take a gentle leave of him for ever. This, therefore, is my first request—a conversation for a few short minutes, if he does not quite abhor the sight of me. My second request is—Oh—not to see, but to hear some account of my poor children.

Bar. If humanity and friendship can avail, he will not for a moment delay your wishes.

Countess. Heaven be with you.

Mrs. H. And my prayers. [Exit BARON.

Countess. Come, my friend, come into the air, till he returns with hope and consolation.

Mrs. H. Oh! my heart! how art thou afflicted! My husband! My little ones! Past joys and future fears—Oh, dearest madam, there are moments in which we live years! Moments which steal the reses

from the cheek of health, and plough deep furrows in the brow of youth.

Countess. Banish these sad reflections. Come, let us walk. The sun will set soon; let nature's beauties dissipate anxiety.

Mrs. H. Alas! Yes, the setting sun is a proper scene for me.

Countess. Never forget a morning will succeed.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The skirts of the Park, Lodge, &c. as before.

Enter BARON.

Bar. On earth there is but one such pair. They shall not be parted. Yet, what I have undertaken is not so easy as I at first hoped. What can I answer when he asks me, whether I would persuade him to renounce his character, and become the derision of society? For he is right: a faithless wife is a dishonour! and to forgive her, is to share her shame. What though Adelaide may be an exception; a young deluded girl, who has so long and so sincerely repented, yet what cares an unfeeling world for this? The world! he has quitted it. 'Tis evident he loves her still: and upon this assurance builds my sanguine heart the hope of a happy termination to an honest enterprise.

Enter FRANCIS *with two Children,* WILLIAM *and* AMELIA.

Fra. Come along, my pretty ones—come.

Will. Is it far to home?

Fra. No, we shall be there directly now.

Bar. Hold! Whose children are these?

Fra. My master's.

Will. Is that my father?

Bar. It darts like lightning through my brain. A word with you. I know you love your master. Strange things have happened here. Your master has found his wife again.

Fra. Indeed! Glad to hear it.

Bar. Mrs. Haller—

Fra. Is she his wife? Still more glad to hear it.

Bar. But he is determined to go from her.

Fra. Oh!

Bar. We must try to prevent it.

Fra. Surely.

Bar. The unexpected appearance of the children may perhaps assist us.

Fra. How so?

Bar. Hide yourself with them in that hut. Before a quarter of an hour is passed you shall know more.

Fra. But—

Bar. No more questions, I entreat you. Time is precious.

Fra. Well, Well: questions are not much in my way. Come, children.

Will. Why, I thought you told me I should see my father.

Fra. So you shall, my dear. Come, moppets.

[Goes into the Hut with the Children.]

Bar. Excellent! I promise myself much from this little artifice. If the mild look of the mother fails, the innocent smiles of these his own children will surely find the way to his heart. *[Taps at the Lodge door, the STRANGER comes out.]* Charles, I wish you joy.

Stra. Of what?

Bar. You have found her again.

Stra. Show a bankrupt the treasure which he once possessed, and then congratulate him on the amount!

Bar. Why not, if it be in your power to retrieve the whole?

Stra. I understand you : you are a negociator from my wife. It won't avail.

Bar. Learn to know your wife better. Yes, I am a messenger from her ; but without power to treat. She, who loves you unutterably, who without you never can be happy, renounces your forgiveness ; because, as she thinks, your honour is incompatible with such a weakness.

Stra. Pshaw ! I am not to be caught.

Bar. Charles ! consider well—

Stra. Steinfort, let me explain all this. I have lived here four months. Adelaide knew it.

Bar. Knew it ! She never saw you till to-day.

Stra. That you may make fools believe. Hear further : she knows too, that I am not a common sort of man ; that my heart is not to be attacked in the usual way. She, therefore, framed a deep concerted plan. She played a charitable part ; but in such a way, that it always reached my ears. She played a pious, modest, reserved part, in order to excite my curiosity. And at last, to-day she plays the prude. She refuses my forgiveness, in hopes by this generous device, to extort it from my compassion.

Bar. Charles ! I have listened to you with astonishment. This is a weakness only to be pardoned in a man who has so often been deceived by the world. Your wife has expressly and stedfastly declared, that she will not accept your forgiveness, even if you yourself were weak enough to offer it.

Stra. What then has brought you hither ?

Bar. More than one reason. First, I am come in my own name, as your friend and comrade, to conjure you solemnly not to spurn this creature from you ; for, by my soul, you will not find her equal.

Stra. Give yourself no further trouble.

Bar. Be candid, Charles. You love her still.

Stra. Alas ! yes.

Bar. Her sincere repentance has long since obliterated her crime.

Stra. Sir! a wife, once induced to forfeit her honour, must be capable of a second crime.

Bar. Not so, Charles. Ask your heart what portion of the blame may be your own.

Stra. Mine!

Bar. Yours. Who told you to marry a thoughtless inexperienced girl? One scarce expects established principles at five-and-twenty in a man, yet you require them in a girl of sixteen! But of this no more. She has erred; she has repented; and, during three years, her conduct has been so far above reproach, that even the piercing eye of calumny has not discovered a speck upon this radiant orb.

Stra. Now, were I to believe all this—and I confess that I would willingly believe it—yet can she never again be mine. [*With extreme asperity.*] Oh! what a feast would it be for the painted dolls and vermin of the world, when I appeared among them with my runaway wife upon my arm! What mocking, whispering, pointing!—Never! Never! Never!

Bar. Enough! As a friend I have done my duty: I now appear as Adelaide's ambassador. She requests one moment's conversation: she wishes once again to see you, and never more! You cannot deny her this, this only, this last, request.

Stra. Oh! I understand this too: she thinks my firmness will be melted by her tears: she is mistaken. She may come.

Bar. She will come, to make you feel how much you mistake her. I go for her.

Stra. Another word.

Bar. Another word!

Stra. Give her this paper, and these jewels. They belong to her. [*Presenting them.*

Bar. That you may do yourself. [*Exit.*

Stra. The last anxious moment of my life draws

near. I shall see her once again ; I shall see her, on whom my soul doats. Is this the language of an injured husband ? What is this principle which we call honour ? Is it a feeling of the heart, or a quibble in the brain ? I must be resolute : it cannot now be otherwise. Let me speak solemnly, yet mildly ; and beware that nothing of reproach escape my lips. Yes, her penitence is real. She shall not be obliged to live in mean dependence : she shall be mistress of herself, she shall—*[Looks round and shudders.]* Ha ! they come. Awake, insulted pride ! Protect me, injured honour !

Enter MRS. HALLER, COUNTESS, and BARON.

Mrs. H. [Advances slowly, and in a tremour. COUNTESS attempts to support her.] Leave me now, I beseech you. *[Approaches the STRANGER, who, with averted countenance, and in extreme agitation, awaits her address.]* My lord !

Stra. [With gentle tremulous utterance, and face still turned away.] What would you with me, Adelaide ?

Mrs. H. [Much agitated.] No—for Heaven's sake ! I was not prepared for this—Adelaide !—No, no. For Heaven's sake !—Harsh tones alone are suited to a culprit's ear.

Stra. [Endeavouring to give his voice firmness.] Well, madam !

Mrs. H. Oh ! if you will ease my heart, if you will spare and pity me, use reproaches.

Stra. Reproaches ! Here they are ; here on my sal-low cheek—here in my hollow eye—here in my faded form. These reproaches I could not spare you.

Mrs. H. Were I a hardened sinner, this forbearance would be charity : but I am a suffering penitent, and it overpowers me. Alas ! then I must be the herald of my own shame. For, where shall I find peace, till I have eased my soul by my confession !

Stra. No confession, madam. I release you from

every humiliation. I perceive you feel, that we must part for ever.

Mrs. H. I know it. Nor come I here to supplicate your pardon; nor has my heart contained a ray of hope that you would grant it. All I dare ask is, that you will not curse my memory.

Stra. [*Moved.*] No, I do not curse you. I shall never curse you.

Mrs. H. [*Agitated.*] From the conviction that I am unworthy of your name, I have, during three years, abandoned it. But this is not enough; you must have that redress which will enable you to chuse another—another wife; in whose chaste arms, may Heaven protect your hours in bliss! This paper will be necessary for the purpose; it contains a written acknowledgment of my guilt.

[*Offers it trembling.*

Stra. [*Tearing it.*] Perish the record for ever.—No, Adelaide, you only have possessed my heart; and, I am not ashamed to own it, you alone will reign there for ever.—Your own sensations of virtue, your resolute honour, forbid you to profit by my weakness; and even if—Now, by Heaven, this is beneath a man! But—never—never will another fill Adelaide's place here.

Mrs. H. [*Trembling.*] Then nothing now remains but that one sad, hard, just word—farewell!

Stra. Stay a moment. For some months we have, without knowing it, lived near each other. I have learnt much good of you. You have a heart open to the wants of your fellow creatures. I am happy that it is so. You shall not be without the power of gratifying your benevolence. I know you have a spirit that must shrink from a state of obligation. This paper, to which the whole remnant of my fortune is pledged, secures you independence, Adelaide: and let the only recommendation of the gift be, that it will

administer to you the means of indulging in charity, the divine propensity of your nature.

Mrs. H. Never! To the labour of my hands alone will I owe my sustenance. A morsel of bread, moistened with the tear of penitence, will suffice my wishes, and exceed my merits. It would be an additional reproach, to think that I served myself, or even others, from the bounty of a man whom I had so deeply injured.

Stra. Take it, madam; take it.

Mrs. H. I have deserved this. But I throw myself upon your generosity. Have compassion on me!

Stra. [*Aside.*] Villain! of what a woman hast thou robbed me!—[*Puts up the paper.*] Well, madam, I respect your sentiments, and withdraw my request; but on condition, that if you ever should be in want of any thing, I may be the first and only person in the world, to whom you will make application.

Mrs. H. I promise it, my lord.

Stra. And now I may, at least, desire you to take back what is your own—your jewels.

[*Gives her the casket.*]

Mrs. H. [*Opens it in violent agitation, and her tears burst upon it.*] How well do I recollect the sweet evening when you gave me these! That evening, my father joined our hands; and joyfully I pronounced the oath of eternal fidelity.—It is broken. This locket, you gave me on my birthday—That was a happy day! We had a country feast—How cheerful we all were!—This bracelet, I received after my William was born! No! take them—take them—I cannot keep these, unless you wish, that the sight of them should be an incessant reproach to my almost broken heart.

[*Gives them back.*]

Stra. [*Aside.*] I must go. My soul and pride will hold no longer. [*Turning towards her.*] Farewell!

Mrs. H. Oh! but one minute more; an answer to but one more question,—Feel for a mother's heart!—Are my children still alive?

Stra. Yes, they are alive.

Mrs. H. And well?

Stra. Yes, they are well.

Mrs. H. Heaven be praised! William must be much grown.

Stra. I believe so.

Mrs. H. What! have you not seen them!—And little Amelia, is she still your favorite? [*The STRANGER, who is in violent agitation throughout this scene, remains in silent contention between honour and affection.*] Oh! let me behold them once again!—let me once more kiss the features of their father in his babes, and I will kneel to you, and part with them for ever.

[*She kneels—he raises her.*]

Stra. Willingly, Adelaide! This very night. I expect the children every minute. They have been brought up near this spot. I have already sent my servant for them. He might ere this time, have returned. I pledge my word to send them to the Castle as soon as they arrive. There, if you please, they may remain 'till daybreak to-morrow: then they must go with me.

[*The COUNTESS and BARON, who at a little distance have listened to the whole conversation with the warmest sympathy, exchange signals. BARON goes into the Hut, and soon returns with FRANCIS and the CHILDREN. He gives the GIRL to the COUNTESS, who places herself behind the STRANGER. He himself walks with the BOY behind MRS. HALLER.*]

Mrs. H. In this world, then—We have no more to say—— [*Seizing his hand.*] Forget a wretch, who

never will forget you.—And when my penance shall have broken my heart,—when we again meet in a better world——

Stra. There, Adelaide, you may be mine again.

Mrs. H. } Oh! Oh! [Parting.

Stra.

[But as they are going, she encounters the Boy, and he the GIRL.

Children. Dear father! Dear mother!

[They press the CHILDREN in their arms with speechless affection; then tear themselves away—gaze at each other—spread their arms, and rush into an embrace. The CHILDREN run, and cling round their Parents. The curtain falls.

THE END.

DE MONFORT.



DE MONFORT — ALONE WITH THEE!

ACT. V.

SCENE. II.

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1807

DE MONFORT;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By JOANNA BAILLIE;

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
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DE MOZART

WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRINTER,
LONDON.

REMARKS.

Amongst the many female writers of this and other nations, how few have arrived at the elevated character of a woman of genius!

The authoress of "De Monfort" received that rare distinction, upon this her first publication.

There was genius in the novelty of her conception, in the strength of her execution; and though her play falls short of dramatic excellence, it will ever be rated as a work of genius.

Joanna Baillie, in her preface to her first publication, displays knowledge, taste, and judgment, upon the subject of the drama, to a very high degree: still, as she observes, "theory and practice are very different things;" and, perhaps, so distinct is the art of criticism, from the art of producing plays, that no one critic so good as herself, has ever written a play half so good as the following tragedy.

Authors may think too profoundly, as well as too superficially—and if a dramatic author, with the most accurate knowledge of the heart of man, probe it too far, the smaller, more curious, and new created passions, which he may find there, will be too delicate for the observation of those who hear and see in a mixed, and, sometimes riotous, company.

The spirit, the soul, the every thought and sensation of the first character in this piece, De Monfort, is clearly discerned by the reader, and he can account for all the events to which they progressively lead: but the most attentive auditor, whilst he plainly beholds effects, asks after causes; and not perceiving those diminutive seeds of hatred, here described, till, swollen, they extend to murder, he conceives the hero of the tragedy to be more a pitiable maniac, than a man acting under the dominion of natural propensity.

Even to the admiring reader of this work, who sees the delineation of nature in every page, it may perchance occur, that disease must have certain influence with hate so rancorous; for rooted antipathy, without some more considerable provocation than is here adduced, is very like the first unhappy token of insanity.

Strike not upon one particular chord in all De Monfort's feelings, and he is a noble creature; but from this individual string vibrates all that is mean and despicable in man. Thus is the mind of the lunatic generally tyrannized by one obstinate idea.

Though hatred be the passion described in this tragedy, pride was its origin, and envy its promoter.—The schoolboy, who, by his ridicule, wounded the self importance of his playfellow, might, we find, have been forgiven, had not good fortune bestowed, on this Rezenvelt, unexpected riches, social qualities, and friends; to rival those possessed by Monfort, his former superior.

From hence is derived this most admirable moral—The proud man, yielding to every vice which pride

engenders, descends, in the sequel of his arrogance, to be the sport of his enemy, the pity of his friends, to receive his life a gift from the man he abhors, and to do a midnight murder!

Still the author's talents invest with dignity this cowardly assassin, and he inspires a sublime horror to the last moment of his existence—and even when extended as a corse.

The character of Rezenvelt is well drawn; and, in one scene, gives an excellent sample of the writer's powers in comedy; in that comic dialogue, at least, which has most pleasant effect, when dispersed through a tragedy.

On Jane De Monfort she has bestowed some of her very best poetic descriptions; and, from the young Page's first account of the "queenly" stranger, has given such a striking resemblance of both the person and mien of Mrs. Siddons, that it would almost raise a suspicion she was, at the time of the writing, designed for the representation of this noble female.

This drama, of original and very peculiar formation, plainly denotes that the authoress has studied theatrical productions as a reader more than as a spectator; and it may be necessary to remind her—that Shakspeare gained his knowledge of the effect produced from plays upon an audience, and profited, through such attainment, by his constant attendance on dramatic representations, even with the assiduity of a performer.

Of this tragedy, which she certainly possessed the genius to have made of the highest importance in

theatric exhibition, she may now exclaim, in De Monfort's words—more impressive than any the whole composition contains—

“ 'Tis done, 'tis number'd with the things o'erpast;

“ 'Would! 'would it were to come!”

But let her also reflect, that other dramas may yet proceed from her pen, to gratify every expectation which this production has excited.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DE MONFORT	<i>Mr. Kemble.</i>
REZENVELT	<i>Mr. Talbot.</i>
COUNT FREBERG	<i>Mr. Barrymore.</i>
MANUEL	<i>Mr. Powell.</i>
JEROME	<i>Mr. Downton.</i>
GRIMBALD	<i>Mr. Caulfield.</i>
BERNARD	

MONKS, GENTLEMEN, OFFICERS, PAGE, &c. &c.

JANE DE MONFORT	<i>Mrs. Siddons.</i>
COUNTESS FREBERG	<i>Miss Heard.</i>

ABBESS, NUNS, *and a* LAY SISTER, LADIES, &c.

SCENE—*A Town in Germany.*

DE MONFORT.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

JEROME'S House. A large old-fashioned Chamber.

Jer. [Speaking without.] This way, good masters.

Enter JEROME, bearing a Light, and followed by MANUEL, and SERVANTS carrying Luggage.

Rest your burdens here.

This spacious room will please the marquis best.

He takes me unawares; but ill prepar'd:

If he had sent, e'en though a hasty notice,
I had been glad.

Man. Be not disturb'd, good Jerome;
Thy house is in most admirable order;
And they who travel o' cold winter nights
Think homeliest quarters good.

Jer. He is not far behind?

Man. A little way.

[To the SERVANTS.] Go you, and wait below till he
arrives.

Jer. [*Shaking MANUEL by the Hand.*] Indeed, my friend, I'm glad to see you here,
Yet marvel wherefore.

Man. I marvel wherefore too, my honest Jerome;
But here we are; pry'thee be kind to us.

Jer. Most heartily I will. I love your master:
He is a quiet and a lib'ral man:
A better inmate never cross'd my door.

Man. Ah! but he is not now the man he was.
Lib'ral he will, God grant he may be quiet!

Jer. What has befallen him?

Man. I cannot tell thee;
But, 'faith, there is no living with him now.

Jer. And yet, methinks, if I remember well,
You were about to quit his service, Manuel,
When last he left this house. You grumbled then.

Man. I've been upon the eve of leaving him
These ten long years; for many times is he
So difficult, capricious, and distrustful,
He galls my nature—yet, I know not how,
A secret kindness binds me to him still.

Jer. Some, who offend from a suspicious nature,
Will afterwards such fair confession make
As turns e'en the offence into a favour.

Man. Yes, some indeed do so: so will not he:
He'd rather die than such confession make.

Jer. Ay, thou art right; for now I call to mind
That once he wrong'd me with unjust suspicion,
When first he came to lodge beneath my roof;
And when it so fell out that I was proved
Most guiltless of the fault, I truly thought
He would have made profession of regret;
But silent, haughty, and ungraciously
He bore himself as one offended still.
Yet shortly after, when unwittingly
I did him some slight service, o'the sudden
He overpower'd me with his grateful thanks;
And would not be restrain'd from pressing on me

A noble recompense. I understood
His o'erstrain'd gratitude and bounty well,
And took it as he meant.

Man. 'Tis often thus.

I would have left him many years ago,
But that with all his faults there sometimes come
Such bursts of natural goodness from his heart,
As might engage a harder churl than me
To serve him still.—And then his sister too,
A noble dame, who should have been a queen:
The meanest of her hinds, at her command,
Had fought like lions for her, and the poor,
E'en o'er their bread of poverty, had bless'd her—
She would have grieved if I had left my lord.

Jer. Comes she along with him?

Man. No, he departed all unknown to her,
Meaning to keep conceal'd his secret route;
But well I knew it would afflict her much;
And therefore left a little nameless billet,
Which after our departure, as I guess,
Would fall into her hands, and tell her all.
What could I do? O'tis a noble lady!

Jer. All this is strange—something disturbs his
mind—

Belike he is in love.

Man. No, Jerome, no.

Once on a time I serv'd a noble master,
Whose youth was blasted with untoward love,
And he, with hope and fear and jealousy
For ever toss'd, led an unquiet life:
Yet, when unruffled by the passing fit,
His pale wan face such gentle sadness wore
As mov'd a kindly heart to pity him;
But Monfort, even in his calmest hour,
Still bears that gloomy sternness in his eye
Which suddenly repels all sympathy.
O no! good Jerome, no, it is not love.

Jer. Hear I not horses trampling at the gate?

[*Listening.*

He is arrived—stay thou—I had forgot—
A plague upon't! my head is so confus'd—
I will return i'the instant to receive him,

[*Exit hastily.—A great bustle without.—Exit
MANUEL with Lights, and returns again light-
ing in DE MONFORT, as if just alighted from
his journey.*

Man. Your ancient host, my lord, receives you
gladly,

And your apartment will be soon prepared.

De Mon. 'Tis well.

Man. Where shall I place the chest you gave in
charge?

So please you, say my lord.

De Mon. [*Throwing himself into a Chair.*] Where-
e'er thou wilt.

Man. I would not move that luggage till you came.
[*Pointing to certain Things.*

De Mon. Move what thou wilt, and trouble me
no more.

[*MANUEL, with the assistance of other SERVANTS,
sets about putting the things in order, and DE
MONFORT remains sitting in a thoughtful Pos-
ture.*

*Enter JEROME, bearing Wine, &c. on a Salver.—As he
approaches DE MONFORT, MANUEL pulls him by the
Sleeve.*

Man. [*Aside to JEROME.*] No, do not now; he will
not be disturb'd.

Jer. What, not to bid him welcome to my house,
And offer some refreshment?

Man. No, good Jerome.
Softly a little while: I pry'thee do,

[JEROME walks softly on Tiptoes, till he gets behind DE MONFORT, then peeping on one side to see his Face.

Jer. [*Aside to MANUEL.*] Ah, Manuel, what an alter'd man is here!

His eyes are hollow, and his cheeks are pale—
He left this house a comely gentleman.

De Mon. Who whispers there?

Man. 'Tis your old landlord, sir.

Jer. I joy to see you here—I crave your pardon—
I fear I do intrude.—

De Mon. No, my kind host, I am obliged to thee.

Jer. How fares it with your honour?

De Mon. Well enough.

Jer. Here is a little of the fav'rite wine
That you were wont to praise. Pray honour me
[Fills a Glass.]

De Mon. [*After drinking.*] I thank you, Jerome,
'tis delicious.

Jer. Ay, my dear wife did ever make it so.

De Mon. And how does she?

Jer. Alas, my lord! she's dead.

De Mon. Well, then she is at rest.

Jer. How well, my lord!

De Mon. Is she not with the dead, the quiet dead,
Where all is peace? Not e'en the impious wretch,
Who tears the coffin from its earthly vault,
And strews the mould'ring ashes to the wind,
Can break their rest.

Jer. Woe's me! I thought you would have grieved
for her.

She was a kindly soul! Before she died,
When pining sickness bent her cheerless head,
She set my house in order—
And but the morning ere she breath'd her last,
Bade me preserve some flaskets of this wine,
That should the Lord De Monfort come again,

His cup might sparkle still.

[DE MONFORT walks across the Stage, and wipes his Eyes.]

Indeed I fear I have distress'd you, sir;

I surely thought you would be grieved for her.

De Mon. [Taking JEROME'S Hand.] I am, my friend. How long has she been dead?

Jer. Two sad long years.

De Mon. 'Would she were living still!

I was too troublesome, too heedless of her.

Jer. O no! she loved to serve you.

[Loud knocking without.]

De Mon. What fool comes here, at such untimely hours,

To make this cursed noise? [To MANUEL.] Go to the gate. [Exit MANUEL.]

All sober citizens are gone to bed;

It is some drunkards on their nightly rounds,

Who mean it but in sport.

Jer. I hear unusual voices—here they come.

Enter MANUEL, showing in COUNT FREBERG and his LADY.

Freb. [Running to embrace DE MONFORT.] My dearest Monfort! most unlook'd for pleasure!

Do I indeed embrace thee here again?

I saw thy servant standing by the gate,

His face recall'd, and learnt the joyful tidings.

Welcome, thrice welcome here!

De Mon. I thank thee, Freberg, for this friendly visit,

And this fair lady too.

[Bowing to the LADY.]

Lady. I fear, my lord,

We do intrude at an untimely hour:

But now returning from a midnight mask,

My husband did insist that we should enter.

Freb. No, say not so; no hour untimely call

Which doth together bring long absent friends.
Dear Monfort, wherefore hast thou play'd so sly,
To come upon us thus all suddenly?

De Mon. O! many varied thoughts do cross our
brain,
Which touch the will, but leave the memory track-
less;

And yet a strange compounded motive make
Wherefore a man should bend his evening walk
To th' east or west, the forest or the field.
Is it not often so?

Freb. I ask no more, happy to see you here
From any motive. There is one behind,
Whose presence would have been a double bliss:
Ah! how is she? The noble Jane de Monfort.

De Mon. [*Confused.*] She is—I have—I left my
sister well.

Lady. [*To FREBERG.*] My Freberg, you are heed-
less of respect:

You surely mean to say the Lady Jane.

Freb. Respect! No, madam; princess, empress,
queen,

Could not denote a creature so exalted
As this plain native appellation doth,
The noble Jane de Monfort.

Lady. [*Turning from him displeased to MONFORT.*]
You are fatigued, my lord; you want repose;
Say, should we not retire?

Freb. Ha! is it so?
My friend, your face is pale, have you been ill?

De Mon. No, Freberg, no; I think I have been
well.

Freb. [*Shaking his Head.*] I fear thou hast not,
Monfort—Let it pass.

We'll re-establish thee: we'll banish pain.
I will collect some rare, some cheerful friends,
And we shall spend together glorious hours,

That gods might envy. Little time so spent,
Doth far outvalue all our life beside.
This is indeed our life, our waking life,
The rest dull breathing sleep.

De Mon. Thus, it is true, from the sad years of
life

We sometimes do short hours, yea minutes strike,
Keen, blissful, bright, never to be forgotten;
Which, through the dreary gloom of time o'erpast,
Shine like fair sunny spots on a wild waste.
But few they are, as few the heaven-fir'd souls
Whose magic power creates them. Bless'd art thou,
If, in the ample circle of thy friends,
Thou canst but boast a few.

Freb. Judge for thyself: in truth, I do not boast.
There is amongst my friends, my later friends,
A most accomplish'd stranger. New to Amberg;
But just arriv'd, and will ere long depart.
I met him in Franconia two years since.
He is so full of pleasant anecdote,
So rich, so gay, so poignant is his wit,
Time vanishes before him as he speaks,
And ruddy morning through the lattice peeps
Ere night seems well begun.

De Mon. How is he call'd?

Freb. I will surprise thee with a welcome face:
I will not tell thee now.

Lady. [*To MONFORT.*] I have, my lord, a small
request to make,
And must not be denied. I too may boast
Of some good friends, and beauteous countrywomen:
To-morrow night I open wide my doors
To all the fair and gay; beneath my roof
Music, and dance, and revelry shall reign.
I pray you come and grace it with your presence.

De Mon. You honour me too much to be denied.

Lady. I thank you, sir; and, in return for this,
We shall withdraw, and leave you to repose.

Freb. Must it be so? Good night—sweet sleep to thee! [To DE MONFORT.]

De Mon. [To FREBERG.] Good night. [To LADY.] Good night, fair lady.

Lady. Farewell! [Exeunt FREBERG and LADY.]

De Mon. [To JEROME.] I thought Count Freberg had been now in France.

Jer. He meant to go, as I have been inform'd.

De Mon. Well, well, prepare my bed; I will to rest, [Exit JEROME.]

I know not how it is, my heart stands back, [Aside.]
And meets not this man's love.—Friends! rarest friends!

Rather than share his undiscerning praise
With every table wit, and book-form'd sage,
And paltry poet puling to the moon,
I'd court from him proscription, yea abuse,
And think it proud distinction. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

A small Apartment in JEROME'S House: a Table and Breakfast set out.

Enter DE MONFORT, followed by MANUEL, and sets himself down by the Table, with a cheerful Face.

De Mon. Manuel, this morning's sun shines pleasantly:

These old apartments too are light and cheerful.
Our landlord's kindness has reviv'd me much;
He serves as though he loved me. This pure air

Braces the listless nerves, and warms the blood :
I feel in freedom here.

[*Filling a Cup of Coffee, and drinking.*]

Man. Ah! sure, my lord,
No air is purer than the air at home.

De Mon. Here can I wander with assured steps,
Nor dread, at every winding of the path,
Lest an abhorred serpent cross my way,
To move—

[*Stopping short.*]

Man. What says your honour?
There are no serpents in our pleasant fields.

De Mon. Think'st thou there are no serpents in the
world,

But those who slide along the grassy sod,
And sting the luckless foot that presses them!
There are, who, in the path of social life,
Do bask their spotted skins in fortune's sun,
And sting the soul—Ay, till its healthful frame
Is chang'd to secret, fest'ring, sore disease,
So deadly is the wound.

Man. Heaven guard your honour from such horrid
skathe!

They are but rare, I hope?

De Mon. [*Shaking his Head.*] We mark the hol-
low eye, the wasted frame,
The gait disturb'd of wealthy, honour'd men,
But do not know the cause.

Man. 'Tis very true. God keep you well, my lord!

De Mon. I thank thee, Manuel, I am very well.
I shall be gay too by the setting sun.
I go to revel it with sprightly dames,
And drive the night away.

[*Filling another Cup, and drinking.*]

Man. I should be glad to see your honour gay.

De Mon. And thou too shalt be gay. There, ho-
nest Manuel,

Put these broad pieces in thy leathern purse,
And take at night a cheerful jovial glass.

Here is one too, for Bremer; he loves wine;
And one for Jaques: be joyful all together.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. My lord, I met e'en now, a short way off,
Your countryman, the Marquis Rezenvelt.

De Mon. [*Starting from his Seat, and letting the
Cup fall from his Hand.*] Who, say'st thou?

Serv. Marquis Rezenvelt, an' please you.

De Mon. Thou ly'st—it is not so—it is impos-
sible!

Serv. I saw him with these eyes, plain as yourself.

De Mon. Fool! 'tis some passing stranger thou hast
seen,

And with a hideous likeness been deceiv'd.

Serv. No other stranger could deceive my sight.

De Mon. [*Dashing his clenched Hand violently upon
the Table, and overturning every Thing.*] Hea-
ven blast thy sight! it lights on nothing good.

Serv. I surely thought no harm to look upon him!

De Mon. What, dost thou still insist? Him must
it be?

Does it so please thee well? [*SERVANT endeavours to
speak.*] Hold thy damn'd tongue!

By Heaven I'll kill thee! [*Going furiously up to him.*

Man. [*In a soothing Voice.*] Nay, harm him not,
my lord; he speaks the truth;

I've met his groom, who told me certainly

His lord is here. I should have told you so,

But thought, perhaps, it might displease your ho-
nour.

De Mon. [*Becoming all at once calm, and turning
sternly to MANUEL.*] And how dar'st thou to
think it would displease me?

What is't to me who leaves or enters Amberg?

But it displeases me, yea, ev'n to phrensy,

That every idle fool must hither come

To break my leisure with the paltry tidings
Of all the cursed things he stares upon.

[SERVANT attempts to speak—DE MONFORT
stamps with his Foot.

Take thine ill-favour'd visage from my sight,
And speak of it no more. [Exit SERVANT.
And go thou too; I chuse to be alone.

[Exit MANUEL.—DE MONFORT goes to the
Door by which they went out; opens it, and
looks.

But is he gone indeed? Yes, he is gone.

[Goes to the opposite Door, opens it, and looks:
then gives loose to all the Fury of Gesture,
and walks up and down in great Agitation.

It is too much: by Heaven, it is too much!
He haunts me—stings me—like a devil haunts—
He'll make a raving maniac of me—Villain!
The air wherein thou draw'st thy fulsome breath
Is poison to me—Oceans shall divide us! [Pauses.
But no; thou think'st I fear thee, cursed reptile!
And hast a pleasure in the damned thought.
Though my heart's blood should curdle at thy sight,
I'll stay and face thee still.

[Knocking at the Chamber Door.

Ha! Who knocks there?

Freberg. [Without.] It is thy friend, De Monfort.

De Mon. [Opening the Door.] Enter, then.

Enter FREBERG.

Freb. [Taking his Hand kindly.] How art thou now?
How hast thou pass'd the night?

Has kindly sleep refresh'd thee?

De Mon. Yes, I have lost an hour or two in sleep,
And so should be refresh'd.

Freb. And art thou not?

Thy looks speak not of rest. Thou art disturb'd.

De Mon. No, somewhat ruffled from a foolish cause,
Which soon will pass away.

Freb. [*Shaking his Head.*] Ah! no, De Monfort!
something in thy face
Tells me another tale. Then wrong me not:
If any secret grief distract thy soul,
Here am I all devoted to thy love:
Open thy heart to me. What troubles thee?

De Mon. I have no grief: distress me not, my
friend.

Freb. Nay, do not call me so. Wert thou my
friend,
Wouldst thou not open all thine inmost soul,
And bid me share its every consciousness?

De Mon. Freberg, thou know'st not man; not na-
ture's man,
But only him who, in smooth studied works
Of polish'd sages, shines deceitfully
In all the splendid foppery of virtue.
That man was never born whose secret soul,
With all its motley treasure of dark thoughts,
Foul fantasies, vain musings, and wild dreams,
Was ever opened to another's scan.
Away, away! it is delusion all.

Freb. Well, be reserved then, perhaps I'm wrong.

De Mon. How goes the hour?

Freb. 'Tis early: a long day is still before us,
Let us enjoy it. Come along with me;
I'll introduce you to my pleasant friend?

De Mon. Your pleasant friend?

Freb. Yes, him of whom I spake.

[*Taking his Hand.*

There is no good I would not share with thee,
And this man's company, to minds like thine,
Is the best banquet-feast I could bestow.
But I will speak in mystery no more:
It is thy townsman, noble Rezenvelt.

[*DE MONFORT pulls his Hand hastily from
FREBERG, and shrinks back.*

Ha! What is this? Art thou pain stricken, Monfort?

Nay, on my life, thou rather seem'st offended:
Does it displease thee that I call him friend!

De Mon. No, all men are thy friends.

Freb. No, say not all men. But thou art offended.
I see it well. I thought to do thee pleasure;
But if his presence is not welcome here,
He shall not join our company to-day.

De Mon. What dost thou mean to say? What is't
to me

Whether I meet with such a thing as Rezenvelt
To-day, to-morrow, every day, or never?

Freb. In truth, I thought you had been well with
him.

He prais'd you much.

De Mon. I thank him for his praise—Come, let us
move:

This chamber is confin'd and airless grown.

[*Starting.*

I hear a stranger's voice?

Freb. 'Tis Rezenvelt.

Let him be told that we are gone abroad.

De Mon. [*Proudly.*] No! let him enter. Who waits
there? Ho! Manuel!

Enter MANUEL.

What stranger speaks below?

Man. The Marquis Rezenvelt.

I have not told him that you are within.

De Mon. [*Angrily.*] And wherefore didst thee not?
Let him ascend.

[*A long Pause. DE MONFORT walking up
and down with a quick Pace.*

*Enter REZENVELT, and runs freely up to DE
MONFORT.*

Rez. [*To DE MONFORT.*] My noble Marquis, wel-
come!

De Mon. Sir, I thank you.

Rez. [To FREBERG.] My gentle friend, well met.
Abroad so early?

Freb. It is indeed an early hour for me.
How sits thy last night's revel on thy spirits?

Rez. O, light as ever. On my way to you,
E'en now, I learnt De Monfort was arrived,
And turn'd my steps aside; so here I am.

[Bowling gaily to DE MONFORT.]

De Mon. I thank you, sir; you do me too much
honour. [Proudly.]

Rez. Nay, say not so; not too much honour
surely,
Unless, indeed, 'tis more than pleases you.

De Mon. [Confused.] Having no previous notice of
your coming,
I look'd not for it.

Rez. Ay, true indeed; when I approach you next,
I'll send a herald to proclaim my coming,
And bow to you by sound of trumpet, Marquis.

De Mon. [To FREBERG, turning haughtily from
REZENVELT with affected indifference.] How
does your cheerful friend, that good old man?

Freb. My cheerful friend? I know not whom you
mean.

De Mon. Count Waterlan.

Freb. I know not one so named.

De Mon. [Very confused.] O pardon me—it was at
Bâle I knew him.

Freb. You have not yet inquired for honest Reis-
dale.

I met him as I came, and mention'd you.
He seem'd amaz'd; and fain he would have learnt
What cause procur'd us so much happiness.
He question'd hard, and hardly would believe;
I could not satisfy his strong desire.

Rez. And know you not what brings De Monfort
here?

Freb. Truly, I do not.

Rez. O! 'tis love of me,
I have but two short days in Amberg been,
And here with postman's speed he follows me,
Finding his home so dull and tiresome grown.

Freb. [To DE MONFORT.] Is Rezenvelt so sadly
miss'd with you?
Your town so chang'd?

De Mon. Not altogether so:
Some witlings and jest-mongers still remain
For fools to laugh at.

Rez. But he laughs not, and therefore he is wise.
He ever smiles on them with sullen brow
Contemptuous; therefore he is very wise.
Nay, daily frets his most refined soul
With their poor folly, to its inmost core;
Therefore he is most eminently wise.

Freb. Fie, Rezenvelt! You are too early gay;
Such spirits rise but with the evening's glass.
They suit not placid morn.

[To DE MONFORT, who, after walking impatiently up and down, comes close to his Ear, and lays hold of his Arm.]

What would you, Monfort?

De Mon. Nothing—Yet, what is't o'clock?
No, no—I had forgot—'tis early still.

[Turns away again.]

Freb. [To REZENVELT.] Waltser informs me that
you have agreed
To read his verses o'er, and tell the truth:
It is a dangerous task.

Rez. Yet I'll be honest:
I can but lose his favour and a feast.

[Whilst they speak, DE MONFORT walks up and down impatiently and irresolute; at last, pulls the Bell violently.]

Enter a SERVANT.

De Mon. [To SERVANT.] What dost thou want?—

Serv. I thought your honour rung.

De Mon. I have forgot—Stay; are my horses saddled?

Serv. I thought, my lord, you would not ride to-day,

After so long a journey.

De Mon. [*Impatiently.*] Well—'tis good.

Begone!—I want thee not.

[*Exit SERVANT.*]

Rez. [*Smiling significantly.*] I humbly crave your pardon, gentle marquis.

It grieves me that I cannot stay with you,

And make my visit of a friendly length.

I trust your goodness will excuse me now;

Another time I shall be less unkind.

[*To FREBERG.*] Will you not go with me?

Freb. Excuse me, Monfort, I'll return again.

[*Exeunt REZENVELT and FREBERG.*]

De Mon. [*Alone, tossing his Arms distractedly.*] Hell hath no greater torment for th' accurs'd

Than this man's presence gives—

Abhorred fiend! he hath a pleasure too,

A damned pleasure, in the pain he gives!

Oh! the side glance of that detested eye!

That conscious smile! that full insulting lip!

It touches every nerve: it makes me mad.

What, does it please thee? Dost thou woo my hate?

Hate shalt thou have! determin'd, deadly hate,

Which shall awake no smile. Malignant villain!

The venom of thy mind is rank and devilish,

And thin the film that hides it.

Thy hateful visage ever spoke thy worth:

I loath'd thee when a boy.

That —— should be besotted with him thus!

And Freberg likewise so bewitched is,

That, like a hireling flatt'rer, at his heels

He meanly paces, off'ring brutish praise.

O! I could curse him too.

[*Exit.*]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A very splendid Apartment in COUNT FREBERG'S House, fancifully decorated. A wide folding Door opened, shows another magnificent Room, lighted up, to receive Company.

Enter, through the folding Doors, the COUNT and COUNTESS, richly dressed.

Freb. [Looking round.] In truth, I like those decorations well:

They suit those lofty walls. And here, my love,
The gay profusion of a woman's fancy
Is well display'd. Noble simplicity
Becomes us less, on such a night as this,
Than gaudy show.

Lady. Is it not noble, then? [*He shakes his Head.*]
I thought it so,
And as I know you love simplicity,
I did intend it should be simple too.

Freb. Be satisfy'd, I pray; we want to-night
A cheerful banquet-house, and not a temple.
How runs the hour?

Lady. It is not late, but soon we shall be rous'd
With the loud entry of our frolic guests.

Enter a PAGE, richly dressed.

Page. Madam, there is a lady in your hall,
Who begs to be admitted to your presence,

Lady. Is it not one of our invited friends ?

Page. No, far unlike to them ; it is a stranger.

Lady. How looks her countenance ?

Page. So queenly, so commanding, and so noble,
I shrunk at first, in awe ; but when she smil'd,
For so she did, to see me thus abash'd,
Methought I could have compass'd sea and land,
To do her bidding.

Lady. Is she young, or old ?

Page. Neither, if right I guess, but she is fair ;
For time hath laid his hand so gently on her,
As he too, had been aw'd.

Lady. The foolish stripling ?
She has bewitch'd thee. Is she large in stature ?

Page. So stately, and so graceful is her form,
I thought at first her stature was gigantic,
But on a near approach I found, in truth,
She scarcely does surpass the middle size.

Lady. What is her garb ?

Page. I cannot well describe the fashion of it.
She is not deck'd in any gallant trim,
But seems to me, clad in the usual weeds
Of high, habitual state ; for as she moves,
Wide flows her robe in many a waving fold,
As I have seen unfurled banners play
With the soft breeze.

Lady. Thine eyes deceive thee, boy,
It is an apparition thou hast seen.

Freb. [*Starting from his Seat, where he has been sitting, during the Conversation, between the LADY and the PAGE.*] It is an apparition he has seen.
Or is it Jane de Monfort ? [*Exit hastily.*]

Lady. [*Displeased.*] No ; such description surely
suits not her.

Did she inquire for me ?

Page. She ask'd to see the lady of Count Freberg.

Lady. Perhaps it is not she—I fear it is—
Ha ! here they come. He has but guess'd too well.

Enter FREBERG, leading in JANE DE MONFORT.

Freb. [*Presenting her to LADY.*] Here, madam, welcome a most worthy guest.

Lady. Madam, a thousand welcomes. Pardon me ;

I could not guess who honour'd me so far ;
I should not else have waited coldly here.

Jane. I thank you for this welcome, gentle countess,

But take those kind excuses back again ;

I am a bold intruder on this hour,

And am entitled to no ceremony.

I came in quest of a dear truant friend,

But Freberg has inform'd me——

And he is well, you say ?

[*To FREBERG.*]

Freb. Yes, well, but joyless.

Jane. It is the usual temper of his mind :

It opens not, but with the thrilling touch

Of some strong heart-string, o'the sudden press'd.

Freb. It may be so, I've known him otherwise,
He is suspicious grown.

Jane. Not so, Count Freberg, Monfort is too noble.
Say rather, that he is a man in grief,
Wearing, at times, a strange, and scowling eye ;
And thou, less generous than beseems a friend,
Hast thought too hardly of him.

Freb. [*Bowing with great Respect.*] So will I say
I'll own, nor word, nor will, that can offend you.

Lady. De Monfort is engag'd to grace our feast,
Ere long, you'll see him here.

Jane. I thank you truly, but this homely dress,
Suits not the splendour of such scenes as these.

Freb. [*Pointing to her Dress.*] Such artless and
majestic elegance,

So exquisitely just, so nobly simple,

Will make the gorgeous blush.

Jane. [*Smiling.*] Nay, nay, be more consistent,
courteous knight,
And do not praise a plain and simple guise
With such profusion of unsimple words.
I cannot join your company to-night.

Lady. Not stay to see your brother?

Jane. Therefore it is, I would not, gentle hostess.
Here he will find all that can woo the heart
To joy, and sweet forgetfulness of pain;
The sight of me would wake his feeling mind
To other thoughts. I am no doting mistress,
No fond, distracted wife, who must forthwith
Rush to his arms and weep. I am his sister:
The eldest daughter of his father's house;
Calm and unwearied is my love for him;
And, having found him, patiently I'll wait,
Nor greet him in the hour of social joy,
To dash his mirth with tears.—

The night wears on; permit me to withdraw.

Freb. Nay, do not, do not injure us so far;
Disguise thyself, and join our friendly train.

Jane. You wear not masks to-night?

Lady. We wear not masks, but you may be conceal'd

Behind the double foldings of a veil.

Jane. [*After pausing to consider.*] In truth, I feel
a little so inclin'd.

Methinks, unknown, I e'en might speak to him,
And gently prove the temper of his mind:
But for the means, I must become your debtor.

[*To LADY.*

Lady. Who waits?

Enter her WOMAN.

Attend this lady to my wardrobe.
And do what she commands you.

[*Exeunt JANE and WAITING WOMAN.*

Freb. [*Looking after JANE, as she goes out, with Admiration.*] Oh! what a soul she bears! see how she steps!

Naught but the native dignity of worth
Ere taught the moving form such noble grace.

Lady. Such lofty mien, and high assumed gait
I've seen, ere now, and men have call'd it pride.

Freb. No, 'faith! thou never didst, but oft, indeed,
The paltry imitation thou hast seen.

How hang those trappings on thy motly gown?

[*Looking at her.*]

They seem like garlands on a May-day queen,
Which hinds have dress'd in sport.

Lady. I'll doff it then, since it displeases you.

Freb. [*Softening.*] No, no, thou art lovely still, in
every garb.—

But see, the guests assemble.

Enter Groups of well dressed People, who pay their Compliments to FREBERG and his LADY; and, followed by her, pass into the inner Apartment, where more Company appear assembling, as if by another Entry.

Freb. [*Who remains on the Front of the Stage, with a Friend or Two.*] How loud the hum of this gay
meeting crowd!

'Tis like a bee-swarm in the noonday sun.

Music will quell the sound. Who waits without?

Music, strike up!

[*A grand Piece of Music is playing, and when it ceases,*

Enter, from the Inner Apartment, REZENVELT, with several GENTLEMEN, all richly dressed.

Freb. What lively gallants quit the field so soon?

[*To those just entered.*]

Are there no beauties in that moving crowd

To fix your fancy?

Rez. Ay, marry are there; men of ev'ry mind
May in that moving crowd some fair one find,
To suit their taste, though whimsical and strange,
As ever fancy own'd.

Beauty of every cast and shade is there,
From the perfection of a faultless form,
Down to the common, brown, unnoted maid,
Who looks but pretty in her Sunday gown.

1 Gent. There is, indeed, a gay variety.

Rez. And if the liberality of nature,
Suffices not, there's store of grafted charms,
Blending in one, the sweets of many plants,
So obstinately, strangely opposite,
As would have well defy'd all other art
But female cultivation. Aged youth,
With borrow'd locks in rosy chaplets bound,
Clothes her dim eye, parch'd lip, and skinny cheek
In most unlovely softness.

And youthful age, with fat, round, trackless face,
The downcast look of contemplation deep,
Most pensively assumes.

Is it not even so? The native prude,
With forced laugh, and merriment uncouth,
Plays off the wild coquet's successful charms
With most unskilful pains; and the coquet,
In temporary crust of cold reserve,
Fixes her studied looks upon the ground
Forbiddingly demure.

Freb. Fie! thou art too severe.

Rez. Say, rather, gentle.

I'faith, the very dwarfs attempt to charm,
With lofty airs of puny majesty,
Whilst potent damsels, of a portly make,
Totter like nurslings, and demand the aid
Of gentle sympathy.
From all those diverse modes of dire assault,
He owns a heart of hardest adamant,
Who shall escape to-night.

Freb. [To DE MONFORT, who has entered during REZENVELT'S speech, and heard the greatest part of it.] Ha! ha! ha! ha!

How pleasantly he gives his wit the rein,
Yet guides his wild career! [DE MONFORT is silent.]

Rez. [Smiling archly.] What think you, Freberg,
the same powerful spell

Of transformation reigns o'er all to-night?

Or that De Monfort is a woman turn'd,

So widely from his native self to swerve,

As grace my gai'ty with a smile of his?

De Mon. Nay, think not, Rezenvelt, there is no
smile

I can bestow on thee. There is a smile,

A smile of nature too, which I can spare,

And yet, perhaps, thou wilt not thank me for it.

[Smiles contemptuously.]

Rez. Not thank thee! It were surely most un-
grateful

No thanks to pay for nobly giving me

What, well we see, hath cost thee so much pain.

For nature hath her smiles, of birth more painful

Than bitt'rest execrations.

Freb. These idle words will lead us to disquiet:

Forbear, forbear, my friends. Go, Rezenvelt,

Accept the challenge of those lovely dames,

Who, through the portal come with bolder steps

To claim your notice.

Enter a Group of LADIES, from the other Apartment.

REZENVELT shrugs up his Shoulders, as if unwilling
to go.

1 Gent. [To REZENVELT.] Behold, in sable veil, a
lady comes,

Whose noble air doth challenge fancy's skill

To suit it with a countenance as goodly.

[Pointing to JANE DE MONFORT, who now enters
in a thick black Veil.]

Rez. Yes, this way lies attraction. [To FREBERG.]
With permission, [Going up to JANE.]
Fair lady, though within that envious shroud
Your beauty deigns not to enlighten us,
We bid you welcome, and our beauties here,
Will welcome you the more for such concealment.
With the permission of our noble host—

[Taking her Hand, and leading her to the Front of
the Stage.

Jane. [To FREBERG.] Pardon me this presumption,
courteous sir:

I thus appear, [Pointing to her Veil.] not careless of
respect

Unto the gen'rous lady of the feast.
Beneath this veil no beauty shrouded is,
That now, or pain, or pleasure can bestow.
Within the friendly cover of its shade
I only wish unknown, again to see
One who, alas! is heedless of my pain.

De Mon. Yes, it is ever thus. Undo that veil,
And give thy count'nance to the cheerful light.
Men, now all soft, and female beauty scorn,
And mock the gentle cares which aim to please.
It is most damnable! undo thy veil,
And think of him no more.

Jane. I know it well, even to a proverb grown,
Is lovers' faith, and I had borne such slight:
But he, who has, alas! forsaken me,
Was the companion of my early days,
My cradle's mate, mine infant play-fellow.
Within our op'ning minds, with riper years
The love of praise, and gen'rous virtue sprung:
Through varied life our pride, our joys, were one;
At the same tale we wept:—he is my brother

De Mon. And he forsook thee?—No, I dare not
curse him:

My heart upbraids me with a crime like his.

Jane. Ah: do not thus distress a feeling heart.
All sisters are not to the soul entwin'd

With equal bands; thine has not watch'd for thee,
Weep'd for thee, cheer'd thee, shar'd thy weal and woe,
As I have done for him.

De Mon. [*Eagerly.*] Ha! has she not?
By Heaven! the sum of all thy kindly deeds!
Were but as chaff, pois'd 'gainst the massy god,
Compar'd to that which I do owe her love.
Oh pardon me! I meant not to offend—
I am too warm—But she, of whom I speak,
Is the dear sister of my earliest love;
In noble, virtuous worth, to none a second:
And though behind those sable folds were hid
As fair a face as ever woman own'd,
Still would I say she is as fair as thee.
How oft amidst the beauty-blazing throng,
I've proudly to th' inquiring stranger told
Her name and lineage! yet, within her house,
The virgin mother of an orphan race
Her dying parents left, this noble woman
Did, like a Roman matron, proudly sit,
Despising all the blandishments of love:
Whilst many a youth his hopeless love conceal'd,
Or, humbly distant, woo'd her like a queen.
Forgive, I pray you! O forgive this boasting!
In faith! I mean you no discourtesy.

Jane. [*Off her Guard, in a soft, natural Tone of Voice.*] Oh no! nor do me any.

De Mon. What voice speaks now? Withdraw—
withdraw this shade!

For if thy face bear semblance to thy voice,
I'll fall, and worship thee!—Pray! pray undo!

[*Puts forth his Hand eagerly, to snatch away the Veil, whilst she shrinks back, and REZENVELT steps between, to prevent him.*

Rez. Stand off! no hand shall lift this sacred veil.

De Mon. What, dost thou think De Monfort fall'n
so low,

That there may live a man beneath heav'n's roof
Who dares to say he shall not?

Rez. He lives, who dares to say——

Jane. [*Throwing back her Veil, very much alarmed, and rushing between them.*] Forbear! forbear!

[*REZENVELT*, very much struck, steps back respectfully, and makes her a very low bow. *DE MONFORT* stands for a while motionless, gazing upon her, till she, looking expressively to him, extends her Arms, and he, rushing into them, bursts into Tears. *FREBERG* seems very much pleased. The Company then gather about them, and the Scene closes.

SCENE II.

DE MONFORT'S Apartments.

Enter DE MONFORT, with a disordered Air, and his Hand pressed upon his Forehead, followed by JANE.

De Mon. No more, my sister, urge me not again:
My secret troubles cannot be revealed.

From all participation of its thoughts

My heart recoils: I pray thee be contented.

Jane. What, must I, like a distant humble friend,

Observe thy restless eye, and gait disturb'd,

In timid silence, whilst with yearning heart

I turn aside to weep? O no! De Monfort!

A nobler task thy nobler mind will give;

Thy true intrusted friend I still shall be.

De Mon. Ah, Jane, forbear! I cannot, e'en to thee.

Jane. Then, fie upon it! fie upon it, Monfort!

There was a time, when, e'en with murder stain'd,

Had it been possible, that such dire deed

Could e'er have been the crime of one so piteous,

Thou wouldst have told it me.

De Mon. So would I now—but ask of this no more.

All other trouble but the one I feel,

I had disclos'd to thee. I pray thee, spare me.
It is the secret weakness of my nature.

Jane. Then secret let it be: I urge no farther.
The eldest of our valiant father's hopes,
So sadly orphan'd, side by side we stood,
Like two young trees, whose boughs, in early strength,
Screen the weak saplings of the rising grove,
And brave the storm together—
I have so long, as if by nature's right,
Thy bosom's inmate and adviser been,
I thought through life I should have so remain'd,
Nor ever known a change. Forgive me, Monfort,
A humbler station will I take by thee:
The close attendant of thy wand'ring steps;
The cheerer of this home, by strangers sought;
The soother of those griefs I must not know:
This is mine office now: I ask no more.

De Mon. Oh Jane! thou dost constrain me with
thy love!
'Would I could tell thee!

Jane. Thou shalt not tell me. Nay, I'll stop mine
ears,
Nor from the yearnings of affection wring
What shrinks from utterance. Let it pass, my brother.

I'll stay by thee; I'll cheer thee—comfort thee:—
Pursue with thee the study of some art,
Or nobler science, that compels the mind
To steady thought, progressive, driving forth
All floating, wild, unhappy fantasies;
Till thou, with brow unclouded, smil'st again,
Like one, who, from dark visions of the night,
When th'active soul, within its lifeless cell
Holds its own world, with dreadful fancy press'd
Of some dire, terrible, or murd'rous deed,
Wakes to the dawning morn, and blesses Heaven.

De Mon. It will not pass away: 'twill haunt me
still.

Jane. Ah ! say not so, for I will haunt thee too ;
And be to it so close an adversary,
That, though I wrestle darkling with the fiend,
I shall o'ercome it.

De Mon. Thou most gen'rous woman !
Why do I treat thee thus ? It should not be——
And yet I cannot—O that cursed villain !
He will not let me be the man I would.

Jane. What say'st thou, Monfort ! Oh ! what words
are these ?

They have awak'd my soul to dreadful thoughts.
I do beseech thee, speak !

[He shakes his Head, and turns from her ; she following him.]

By the affection thou didst ever bear me !
By the dear mem'ry of our infant days !
By kindred living ties, ay, and by those
Who sleep i'the tomb, and cannot call to thee,
I do conjure thee, speak !

[He waves her off with his Hand, and covers his Face with the other, still turning from her.]

Ha ! wilt thou not ?

[Assuming Dignity.] Then, if affection, most unwearied
love,

Tried early, long, and never wanting found
O'er gen'rous man, hath more authority,
More rightful power than crown and sceptre give,
I do command thee.

[He throws himself into a Chair, greatly agitated.]
De Monfort, do not thus resist my love.
Here, I entreat thee, on my bended knees. *[Kneeling.]*
Alas ! my brother !

[DE MONFORT starts up, and, catching her in his Arms, raises her up, then placing her in the Chair, kneels at her Feet.]

De Mon. Thus let him kneel, who should th' abas-
ed be,
And at thine honour'd feet confession make.

I'll tell thee all—but oh! thou wilt despise me.
For in my breast, a raging passion burns,
To which thy soul no sympathy will own.
A passion, which hath made my nightly couch
A place of torment; and the light of day,
With the gay intercourse of social man,
Feel like th' oppressive airless pestilence,
O Jane! thou wilt despise me.

Jane. Say not so;
I never can despise thee, gentle brother,
A lover's jealousy, and hopeless pangs
No kindly heart contemns.

De Mon. A lover, say'st thou?
No, it is hate! black, lasting, deadly hate;
Which thus hath driv'n me forth from kindred peace,
From social pleasure, from my native home,
To be a sullen wand'rer on the earth,
Avoiding all men, cursing, and accurs'd.

Jane. De Monfort, this is fiend-like, frightful, terrible!
What being, by th' Almighty Father form'd,
Of flesh and blood, created even as thou,
Could in thy breast such horrid tempest wake,
Who art thyself his fellow?
Unknit thy brows, and spread those wrath-clench'd hands:

Some sprite accurs'd within thy bosom, mates
To work thy ruin. Strive with it, my brother!
Strive bravely with it;—drive it from thy breast:
'Tis the degrader of a noble heart;
Curse it, and bid it part.

De Mon. It will not part. [*His Hand on his Breast.*]
I've lodged it here too long;
With my first cares I felt its rankling touch,
I loath'd him when a boy.

Jane. Who didst thou say?

De Mon. Oh! that detested Rezenvelt!
E'en in our early sports, like two young whelps

Of hostile breed, instinctively reverse,
Each 'gainst the other pitch'd his other pledge
And frown'd defiance. As we onward pass'd
From youth to man's estate, his narrow art,
And envious gibing malice, poorly veil'd
In the affected carelessness of mirth,
Still more detestable and odious grew.
There is no living being on this earth
Who can conceive the malice of his soul,
With all his gay and damned merriment,
To those, by fortune, or by merit plac'd
Above his paltry self. When, low in fortune,
He look'd upon the state of prosp'rous men,
As nightly birds, rous'd from their murky holes,
Do scowl and chatter at the light of day,
I could endure it: even as we bear
Th' impotent bite of some half-trodden worm,
I could endure it. But when honours came,
And wealth, and new got titles, fed his pride;
Whilst flatt'ring knaves did trumpet forth his praise,
And grov'ling idiots grinn'd applauses on him;
Oh! then I could no longer suffer it!
It drove me frantic——What, what would I give!
What would I give to crush the bloated toad,
So rankly do I loath him!

Jane. And would thy hatred crush the very man
Who gave to thee that life, he might have ta'en?
That life, which thou so rashly didst expose
To aim at his? Oh, this is horrible!

De Mon. Ha! Thou hast heard it, then? From all
the world,
But most of all, from thee, I thought it hid.

Jane. I heard a secret whisper, and resolv'd
Upon the instant, to return to thee.
Didst thou receive my letter?

De Mon. I did! I did! 'twas that which drove me
hither.
I could not bear to meet thine eye again.

Jane. Alas! that, tempted by a sister's tears,
 I ever left thy house! these few past months
 These absent months, have brought us all this woe.
 Had I remain'd with thee it had not been.
 And yet, methinks, it should not move you thus.
 You dar'd him to the field;—both bravely fought;—
 He, more adroit, disarm'd you; courteously
 Return'd the forfeit sword, which, so return'd,
 You did refuse to use against him more;
 And then, as says report, you parted friends.

De Mon. When he disarm'd this curs'd, this worth-
 less hand

Of its most worthless weapon, he but spar'd
 From dev'lish pride, which now derives a bliss
 In seeing me thus fetter'd, sham'd, subjected
 With the vile favour of his poor forbearance;
 Whilst he securely sits with gibing brow
 And basely bates me, like a muzzled cur
 Who cannot turn again.——
 Until that day, till that accursed day,
 I knew not half the torment of this hell,
 Which burnswi thin my breast. Heaven's lightning
 blast him!

Jane. O this is horrible! Forbear, forbear!
 Lest Heaven's vengeance light upon thy head,
 For this most impious wish.

De Mon. Then let it light.
 Torments more fell than I have felt already
 It cannot send. To be annihilated,
 What all men shrink from—to be dust, be nothing,
 Were bliss to me, compar'd to what I am.

Jane. Oh! wouldst thou kill me with these dread-
 ful words?

De Mon. [*Raising his Arms to Heaven.*] Let me
 but once upon his ruin look,
 Then close mine eyes for ever!

[*JANE, in great Distress, staggers back, and supports
 herself upon the side Scene. DE MONFORT,
 alarmed, runs up to her with a softened Voice.*

Ha! how is this? thou'rt ill—thou'rt very pale,

What have I done to thee? Alas, alas!

I meant not to distress thee!—O my sister!

Jane. [*Shaking her Head.*] I cannot speak to thee.

De Mon. I have kill'd thee.

Turn, turn thee not away! look on me still!

Oh, droop not thus! my life, my pride, my sister!

Look on me yet again.

Jane. Thou too, De Monfort,

In better days, wert wont to be my pride.

De Mon. I am a wretch, most wretched in myself,

And still more wretched in the pain I give.

O curse that villain! that detested villain;

He hath spread mis'ry o'er my fated life:

He will undo us all.

Jane. I've held my warfare through a troubled
world,

And borne with steady mind my share of ill;

For then, the helpmate of my toil wert thou.

But now, the wane of life comes darkly on,

And hideous passion tears thee from my heart,

Blasting thy worth.—I cannot strive with this.

De Mon. [*Affectionately.*] What shall I do?

Jane. Call up thy noble spirit;

Rouse all the gen'rous energy of virtue;

And with the strength of heaven-endued man,

Repel the hideous foe. Be great—be valiant!

O, if thou couldst! E'en shrouded as thou art

In all the sad infirmities of nature,

What a most noble creature wouldst thou be!

De Mon. Ay, if I could: alas! alas! I cannot.

Jane. Thou canst, thou may'st, thou wilt.

We shall not part till I have turn'd thy soul.

Enter MANUEL.

De Mon. Ha! some one enters. Wherefore com'st
thou here?

Man. Count Freberg waits your leisure.

De Mon. [*Angrily.*] Begone, begone.—I cannot see him now. [*Exit MANUEL.*]

Jane. Come to my closet ! free from all intrusion, I'll school thee there ; and thou again shalt be My willing pupil, and my gen'rous friend ; The noble Monfort I have lov'd so long, And must not, will not lose.

De Mon. Do as thou wilt ; I will not grieve thee more. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

COUNT FREBERG'S House.

Enter the COUNTESS, followed by the PAGE, and speaking as she enters.

Lady. Take this, and this. [*Giving Two Packets.*]
And tell my gentle friend,
I hope to see her ere the day be done.

Page. Is there no message for the Lady Jane?

Lady. No, foolish boy, that would too far extend
Your morning's route, and keep you absent long.

Page. O no, dear madam ; I'll the swifter run.
The summer's lightning moves not as I'll move,
If you will send me to the Lady Jane.

Lady. No, not so slow, I ween. The summer's lightning !

Thou art a lad of taste and letters grown :
Wouldst poetry admire, and ape thy master.
Go, go ; my little spaniels are unkempt ;
My cards unwritten, and my china broke ;
Thou art too learned for a lady's page.

Did I not bid thee call Theresa here?

Page. Madam, she comes.

Enter THERESA, carrying a Robe over her Arm.

Lady. [To THERESA.] What has employ'd you all this dreary while?

I've waited long.

Ther. Madam, the robe is finish'd.

Lady. Well, let me see it.

[THERESA spreads out the Robe.

[Impatiently to the PAGE.] Boy, hast thou ne'er a hand to lift that fold?

See where it hangs.

[PAGE takes the other Side of the Robe, and spreads it out to its full extent before her, whilst she sits down, and looks at it with much dissatisfaction.

Ther. Does not my lady like this easy form?

Lady. That sleeve is all awry.

Ther. Your pardon, madam;

'Tis but the empty fold that shades it thus.

I took the pattern from a graceful shape;

The Lady Jane de Monfort wears it so.

Lady. Yes, yes, I see 'tis thus with all of you.

Whate'er she wears, is elegance and grace,

Whilst ev'ry ornament of mine, forsooth,

Must hang like trappings on a May-day queen.

[Angrily to the PAGE, who is smiling to himself.

Youngster, be gone! Why do you loiter here!

[Exit PAGE.

Ther. What would you, madam, chuse to wear to-night?

One of your newest robes?

Lady. I hate them all.

Ther. Surely, that purple scarf became you well,

With all those wreaths of richly hanging flowers.

Did I not overhear them say, last night,

As from the crowded ball-room ladies pass'd,

How gay and handsome, in her costly dress,
The Countess Freberg look'd!

Lady. Didst thou o'erhear it?

Ther. I did, and more than this.

Lady. Well, all are not so greatly prejudic'd;
All do not think me like a May-day queen,
Which peasants deck in sport.

Ther. And who said this?

Lady. [*Putting her Handkerchief to her Eyes.*] Ev'n
my good lord, Theresa.

Ther. He said it but in jest. He loves you well.

Lady. I know as well as thee, he loves me well;
But what of that? he takes no pride in me.
Elsewhere his praise and admiration go,
And Jane de Monfort is not mortal woman.

Ther. The wondrous character this lady bears
For worth and excellence; from early youth
The friend and mother of her younger sisters,
Now greatly married, as I have been told,
From her most prudent care, may well excuse
The admiration of so good a man
As my good master is. And then, dear madam,
I must confess, when I myself did hear
How she was come through the rough winter's storm,
To seek and comfort an unhappy brother,
My heart beat kindly to her.

Lady. Ay, ay, there is a charm in this I find:
But wherefore may she not have come as well,
Through wintry storms to seek a lover too?

Ther. No, madam, no, I could not think of this.

Lady. That would reduce her in your eyes, may-
hap,

To woman's level.—Now I see my vengeance!
I'll tell it round that she is hither come,
Under pretence of finding out De Monfort,
To meet with Rezenvelt. When Freberg hears it
'Twill help I ween, to break this magic charm.

Ther. And say what is not, madam?

Lady. How canst thou know that I shall say what
is not?

'Tis like enough I shall but speak the truth.

Ther. Ah no! there is——

Lady. Well, hold thy foolish tongue.

Carry that robe into my chamber, do:

I'll try it there myself.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

DE MONFORT *discovered sitting by a Table, reading.*
After a little time he lays down his Book, and continues in a thoughtful posture. Enter to him JANE DE MONFORT.

Jane. Thanks, gentle brother.—

[*Pointing to the Book.*]

Thy willing mind has been right well employ'd.
Did not thy heart warm at the fair display
Of peace and concord, and forgiving love?

De Mon. I know resentment may to love be turn'd;
Tho' keen and lasting, into love as strong:
And fiercest rivals in the ensanguin'd field
Have cast their brandish'd weapons to the ground,
Joining their mailed breasts in close embrace,
With gen'rous impulse fir'd. I know right well
The darkest, fellest wrongs have been forgiven
Seventy times o'er from blessed heavenly love:

I've heard of things like these ; I've heard, and wept.
But what is this to me ?

Jane. All, all, my brother !
It bids thee too, that noble precept learn,
To love thine enemy.

De Mon. Th' uplifted stroke that would a wretch
destroy
Gorg'd with my richest spoil, stain'd with my blood,
I would arrest, and cry, Hold ! hold ! have mercy :
But when the man most adverse to my nature ;
Who, e'en from childhood hath, with rude malevo-
lence,
Withheld the fair respect all paid beside,
Turning my very praise into derision ;
Who galls and presses me where'er I go,
Would claim the gen'rous feelings of my heart,
Nature herself doth lift her voice aloud,
And cries, it is impossible.

Jane. [*Shaking her Head.*] Ah, Monfort, Monfort !

De Mon. I can forgive th' envenom'd reptile's
sting,
But hate his loathsome self.

Jane. And canst thou do no more, for love of
Heaven ?

De Mon. Alas ! I cannot now so school my mind
As holy men have taught, nor search it truly :
But this, my Jane, I'll do for love of thee ;
And more it is than crowns could win me to,
Or any power but thine. I'll see the man.
Th' indignant risings of abhorrent nature ;
The stern contraction of my scowling brows,
That, like the plant, whose closing leaves do shrink
At hostile touch, still knit at his approach ;
The crooked curving lip, by instinct taught,
In imitation of disgustful things,
To pout and swell, I strictly will repress ;
And meet him with a tamed countenance,
E'en as a townsman, who would live at peace,

And pay him the respect his station claims.
I'll crave his pardon too, for all offence
My dark and wayward temper may have done ;
Nay more, I will confess myself his debtor,
For the forbearance I have curs'd so oft.
Life spar'd by him, more horrid than the grave,
With all its dark corruption ! This I'll do.
Will it suffice thee ? More than this I cannot.

Jane. No more than this do I require of thee
In outward act ; though in thy heart, my friend,
I hop'd a better change, and still will hope.
I told thee Freberg had propos'd a meeting.

De Mon. I know it well.

Jane. And Rezenvelt consents.
He meets you here ; so far he shows respect.

De Mon. Well, let it be ; the sooner past the better.

Jane. I'm glad to hear you say so ; for, in truth,
He has propos'd it for an early hour.
'Tis almost near his time ; I came to tell you.

De Mon. What, comes he here so soon ? shame on
his speed !

It is not decent thus to rush upon me.
He loves the secret pleasure he will feel
To see me thus subdued.

Jane. O say not so ! he comes with heart sincere.

De Mon. Could we not meet elsewhere ? from
home—i'the fields,
Where other men—must I alone receive him ?
Where is your agent, Freberg, and his friends,
That I must meet him here ?

[*Walks up and down, very much disturbed.*]

Now, didst thou say ?—how goes the hour ?—e'en
now !

I would some other friend were first arriv'd.

Jane. See, to thy wish, comes Freberg and his
dame.

De Mon. His lady too! why comes he not alone?
Must all the world stare upon our meeting?

Enter COUNT FREBERG and his COUNTESS.

Freb. A happy morrow to my noble marquis,
And his most noble sister.

Jane. Gen'rous Freberg,
Your face, methinks, forebodes a happy morn,
Open, and cheerful. What of Rezenvelt?

Freb. I left him at his home, prepar'd to follow:
He'll soon appear. [*To DE MONFORT.*] And now,
my worthy friend,

Give me your hand; this happy change delights me.

[*DE MONFORT gives him his Hand coldly, and they walk to the Bottom of the Stage together, in earnest discourse, whilst JANE and the COUNTESS remain in the Front.*]

Lady. My dearest madam, will you pardon me?
I know Count Freberg's bus'ness with De Monfort,
And had a strong desire to visit you,
So much I wish the honour of your friendship.
For he retains no secret from mine ear.

Jane. [*Archly.*] Knowing your prudence.—You
are welcome, madam;
So shall Count Freberg's lady ever be.

[*DE MONFORT and FREBERG returning towards the Front of the Stage, still engaged in Discourse.*]

Freb. He is, indeed, a man, within whose breast,
Firm rectitude and honour hold their seat,
Though unadorned with that dignity
Which were their fittest garb. Now, on my life!
I know no truer heart than Rezenvelt.

De Mon. Well, Freberg, well, there needs not all
this pains
To garnish out his worth; let it suffice.
I am resolv'd I will respect the man,
As his fair station and repute demand.

Methinks I see not at your jolly feasts
The youthful knight, who sung so pleasantly.

Freb. A pleasant circumstance detains him hence;
Pleasant to those who love high gen'rous deeds
Above the middle pitch of common minds;
And, though I have been sworn to secrecy,
Yet must I tell it thee.

This knight is near a kin to Rezenvelt,
To whom an old relation, short while dead,
Bequeath'd a good estate, some leagues distant.
But Rezenvelt, now rich in fortune's store,
Disdain'd the sordid love of further gain,
And, gen'rously the rich bequest resign'd
To this young man, blood of the same degree
To the deceas'd, and low in fortune's gifts,
Who is from hence to take possession of it.
Was it not nobly done?

De Mon. 'Twas right, and honourable.
This morning is oppressive, warm, and heavy:
There hangs a foggy closeness in the air;
Dost thou not feel it?

Freb. O no! to think upon a gen'rous deed
Expands my soul, and makes me lightly breathe.

De Mon. Who gives the feast to-night? His name
escapes me.

You say I am invited.

Freb. Old Count Waterlan:
In honour of your townsman's gen'rous gift
He spreads the board.

De Mon. He is too old to revel with the gay.

Freb. But not too old is he to honour virtue.
I shall partake of it with open soul;
For, on my honest faith, of living men
I know not one, for talents, honour, worth,
That I should rank superior to Rezenvelt.

De Mon. How virtuous he hath been in three short
days!

Freb. Nay, longer, marquis, but my friendship
rests
Upon the good report of other men ;
And that has told me much.

[*DE MONFORT* *aside*, going some steps hastily, from
FREBERG, and rending his Cloak with Agitation
as he goes.

'Would he were come ! by Heaven, I would he were !
This fool besets me so.

[*Suddenly correcting himself*, and joining the *LADIES*,
who have retired to the Bottom of the Stage, he
speaks to *COUNTESS FREBERG* with affected
cheerfulness.

The sprightly dames of Amberg rise betimes,
Untarnish'd by the vigils of the night.

Lady. Praise us not rashly, 'tis not always so.

De Mon. He does not rashly praise, who praises
you ;

For he were dull indeed——

[*Stopping short*, as if he heard something.

Lady. How dull, indeed ?

De Mon. I should have said—It has escap'd me
now.—

[*Listening again*, as if he heard something.

Jane. [*To DE MONFORT.*] What, hear you aught ?

De Mon. [*Hastily.*] 'Tis nothing.

Lady. [*To DE MONFORT.*] Nay, do not let me lose
it so, my lord.

Some fair one has bewitch'd your memory,
And robs me of the half-form'd compliment.

Jane. Half utter'd praise is to the curious mind,
As to the eye, half veiled beauty is,
More precious than the whole. Pray pardon him.
Some one approaches. [*Listening.*

Freb. No, no, it is the servant who ascends ;
He will not come so soon.

De Mon. [*Off his Guard.*] 'Tis Rezenvelt : I heard
his well-known foot !

From the first staircase, mounting step by step.

Freb. How quick an ear thou hast for distant sound!

I heard him not.

[DE MONFORT *looks embarrassed, and is silent.*

Enter REZENVELT.

[DE MONFORT, *recovering himself, goes up to receive REZENVELT, who meets him with a cheerful Countenance.*

De Mon. [To REZ.] I am, my lord, beholden to you greatly.

This ready visit makes me much your debtor.

Rez. Then may such debts between us, noble marquis,

Be oft incurr'd, and often paid again.

[To JANE.] Madam, I am devoted to your service, And ev'ry wish of yours commands my will.

[To COUNTESS.] Lady, good morning. [To FREB.]

Well, my gentle friend,

You see I have not linger'd long behind.

Freb. No, thou art sooner than I look'd for thee.

Rez. A willing heart adds feather to the heel, And makes the clown a winged Mercury.

De Mon. Then let me say, that, with a grateful mind,

I do receive these tokens of good will;
And must regret that, in my wayward moods,
I have too oft forgot the due regard
Your rank and talents claim.

Rez. No, no, De Monfort,
You have but rightly curb'd a wanton spirit,
Which makes me too, neglectful of respect.
Let us be friends, and think of this no more.

Freb. Ay, let it rest with the departed shades
Of things which are no more; whilst lovely concord,
Follow'd by friendship sweet, and firm esteem,
Your future days enrich. O heavenly friendship!

Thou dost exalt the sluggish souls of men,
By thee conjoin'd, to great and glorious deeds;
As two dark clouds, when mix'd in middle air,
The vivid lightning's flash, and roar sublime.
Talk not of what is past, but future love.

De Mon. [*With Dignity.*] No, Freberg, no, it must
not. [*To REZENVELT.*] No, my lord.

I will not offer you an hand of concord,
And poorly hide the motives which constrain me.
I would, that, not alone these present friends,
But ev'ry soul in Amberg were assembled,
That I before them all, might here declare
I owe my spared life to your forbearance.
[*Holding out his Hand.*] Take this from one, who
boasts no feeling warmth,
But never will deceive.

[*JANE smiles upon DE MONFORT with great appro-
bation, and REZENVELT runs up to him with
open Arms.*]

Rez. Away with hands! I'll have thee to my
breast.

Thou art, upon my faith, a noble spirit!

De Mon. [*Shrinking back from him.*] Nay, if you
please, I am not so prepar'd—
My nature is of temp'rature too cold—
I pray you pardon me. [*JANE'S Countenance changes.*]
But take this hand, the token of respect;
The token of a will inclin'd to concord;
The token of a mind that bears within
A sense impressivè of the debt it owes you;
And cursed be its power, unnerv'd its strength,
If e'er again it shall be lifted up
To do you any harm.

Rez. Well, be it so, De Monfort, I'm contented;
I'll take thy hand, since I can have no more.
[*Carelessly.*] I take of worthy men whate'er they give.
Their heart I gladly take; if not, their hand:
If that too is withheld, a courteous word,

Or the civility of placid looks ;
And, if e'en these are too great favours deem'd,
'Faith, I can set me down contentedly
With plain and homely greeting, or, God save ye !

[DE MONFORT *aside*, starting away from him
some Paces.

By the good light, he makes a jest of it !

[JANE *seems greatly distressed*, and FREBERG
endeavours to cheer her.

Freb. [To JANE.] Cheer up, my noble friend ; all
will go well ;

For friendship is no plant of hasty growth :
Though planted in esteem's deep-fixed soil,
The gradual culture of kind intercourse
Must bring it to perfection.

[To the COUNTESS.] My love, the morning, now, is far
advanced ;

Our friends elsewhere expect us ; take your leave.

Lady. [To JANE.] Farewell ! dear madam, till the
ev'ning hour.

Freb. [To DE MONFORT.] Good day, De Monfort.

[To JANE.] Most devoutly yours.

Rez. [To FREBERG.] Go not too fast, for I will fol-
low you. [*Exeunt FREBERG and his LADY.*

[To JANE.] The Lady Jane is yet a stranger here :
She might, perhaps, in the purlieus of Amberg
Find somewhat worth her notice.

Jane. I thank you, marquis, I am much en-
gaged ;

I go not out to-day.

Rez. Then fare ye well ! I see I cannot now
Be the proud man who shall escort you forth,
And show to all the world my proudest boast,
The notice and respect of Jane De Monfort.

De Mon. [*Aside, impatiently.*] He says farewell,
and goes not !

Jane. [To REZENVELT.] You do me honour.

Rez. Madam, adieu! [*To JANE.*]—Good morning, noble marquis. [*Exit.*

[*JANE and DE MONFORT look expressively to one another, without speaking, and then*
Exeunt, severally.

SCENE II.

A splendid Banquetting Room.

DE MONFORT, REZENVELT, FREBERG, MASTER OF THE HOUSE, and GUESTS, *are discovered sitting at Table, with Wine, &c. before them.*

SONG.—A GLEE.

*Pleasant is the mantling bowl,
And the song of merry soul;
And the red lamps' cheery light,
And the goblet glancing bright;
Whilst many a cheerful face around,
Listens to the jovial sound.
Social spirits, join with me,
Bless the god of jollity.*

Freb. [*To DE MONFORT, who rises to go away.*] Thou wilt not leave us, Monfort? wherefore so?

De Mon. [*Aside to FREBERG.*] I pray thee take no notice of me now.

Mine ears are stunned with these noisy fools;
Let me escape.

[*Exit, hastily.*
Master of the House. What, is De Monfort gone?

Freb. Time presses him.

Rez. It seem'd to sit right heavily upon him,
We must confess.

Master. [*To FREBERG.*] How is your friend? he
wears a noble mien,
But most averse, methinks, from social pleasure.
Is this his nature?

Freb. No, I've seen him cheerful,
And at the board, with soul-enliven'd face,
Push the gay goblet round.—But it wears late.
We shall seem toppers more than social friends,
If the returning sun surprise us here.
[*To MASTER.*] Good rest, my gen'rous host; we will
retire.

You wrestle with your age most manfully,
But brave it not too far. Retire to sleep.

Master. I will, my friend, but do you still remain,
With noble Rezenvelt, and all my guests.
Ye have not fourscore years upon your head;
Do not depart so soon. God save you all!

[*Exit MASTER, leaning upon a SERVANT.*]

Freb. [*To the GUESTS.*] Shall we resume?

Guests. The night is too far spent.

Freb. Well then, good rest to you.

Rez. [*To GUESTS.*] Good rest, my friends.

[*Exeunt all but FREBERG and REZENVELT.*]

Freb. Alas! my Rezenvelt!
I vainly hop'd the hand of gentle peace,
From this day's reconciliation sprung,
These rude unseemly jarrings had subdu'd:
But I have mark'd, e'en at the social board,
Such looks, such words, such tones, such untold
things,
Too plainly told, 'twixt you and Monfort pass,
That I must now despair.
Yet who could think, two minds so much refin'd,
So near in excellence, should be remov'd!
So far remov'd, in gen'rous sympathy.

Rez. Ay, far remov'd indeed!

Freb. And yet, methought, he made a noble effort,
And with a manly plainness bravely told
The galling debt he owes to your forbearance.

Rez. 'Faith! so he did, and so did I receive it;
When, with spread arms, and heart e'en mov'd to
tears,

I frankly proffer'd him a friend's embrace:
And, I declare, had he as such receiv'd it,
I from that very moment had forborne
All opposition, pride-provoking jest,
Contemning carelessness, and all offence;
And had caress'd him as a worthy heart,
From native weakness such indulgence claiming:
But since he proudly thinks that cold respect,
The former tokens of his lordly favour,
So precious are, that I would sue for them
As fair distinction in the world's eye,
Forgetting former wrongs, I spurn it all;
And but that I do bear the noble woman,
His worthy, his incomparable sister,
Such fix'd profound regard, I would expose him;
And as a mighty bull, in senseless rage,
Rous'd at the baiter's will, with wretched rags
Of ire-provoking scarlet, chafes and bellows,
I'd make him, at small cost of paltry wit,
With all his deep and manly faculties,
The scorn and laugh of fools.

Freb. For Heaven's sake, my friend! restrain your
wrath;

For what has Monfort done of wrong to you,
Or you to him, bating one foolish quarrel,
Which you confess from slight occasion rose,
That in your breasts such dark resentment dwells,
So fix'd, so hopeless?

Rez. O! from our youth he has distinguish'd me
With ev'ry mark of hatred and disgust.
For e'en in boyish sports I still oppos'd

His proud pretensions to pre-eminence;
Nor would I to his ripen'd greatness give
That fulsome adulation of applause
A senseless crowd bestow'd. Though poor in fortune,
I still would smile at vain-assuming wealth:
But when unlook'd for fate on me bestow'd
Riches and splendour equal to his own,
Though I, in truth, despise such poor distinction,
Feeling inclin'd to be at peace with him,
And with all men beside, I curb'd my spirit,
And sought to sooth him. Then, with spiteful rage,
From small offence he rear'd a quarrel with me,
And dar'd me to the field. The rest you know.
In short, I still have been th' opposing rock,
O'er which the stream of his o'erflowing pride
Hath foam'd and bellow'd. Seest thou how it is?

Freb. Too well I see, and warn thee to beware.
Such streams have oft, by swelling floods surcharg'd,
Borne down with sudden and impetuous force
The yet unshaken stone of opposition,
Which had for ages stopp'd their flowing course.
I pray thee, friend, beware.

Rez. Thou canst not mean—he will not murder
me?

Freb. What a proud heart, with such dark passion
toss'd,
May, in the anguish of its thoughts, conceive,
I will not dare to say.

Rez. Ha! ha! thou know'st him not.
Full often have I mark'd it in his youth,
And could have almost lov'd him for the weakness;
He's form'd with such antipathy, by nature,
To all infliction of corporeal pain,
To wounding life, e'en to the sight of blood,
He cannot if he would.

Freb. Then fie upon thee!
It is not gen'rous to provoke him thus.

But let us part ; we'll talk of this again.
Something approaches.—We are here too long.

Rez. Well, then, to-morrow I'll attend your call.
Here lies my way. Good night. [*Exit.*

Enter GRIMBALD.

Grim. Forgive, I pray, my lord, a stranger's boldness.

I have presum'd to wait your leisure here,
Though at so late an hour.

Freb. But who art thou ?

Grim. My name is Grimbald, sir,
A humble suitor to your honour's goodness,
Who is the more embolden'd to presume,
In that the noble Marquis of De Monfort
Is so much fam'd for good and gen'rous deeds.

Freb. You are mistaken, I am not the man.

Grim. Then, pardon me ; I thought I could not err.
That mien so dignified, that piercing eye,
Assur'd me it was he.

Freb. My name is not De Monfort, courteous stranger ;
But, if you have a favour to request,
I may, perhaps, with him befriend your suit.

Grim. I thank your honour, but I have a friend
Who will commend me to De Monfort's favour :
The Marquis Rezenvelt has known me long,
Who, says report, will soon become his brother.

Freb. If thou wouldst seek thy ruin from De Monfort,
The name of Rezenvelt employ, and prosper ;
But, if aught good, use any name but his.

Grim. How may this be ?

Freb. I cannot now explain.
Early to-morrow call upon Count Freberg ;
So am I call'd, each burgher knows my house,

And there instruct me how to do you service.
Good night.

[Exit.

Grim. [Alone.] Well, this mistake may be of service to me;

And yet my bus'ness I will not unfold
To this mild, ready, promise-making courtier;
I've been by such too oft deceiv'd already:
But if such violent enmity exists
Between De Monfort and this Rezenvelt,
He'll prove my advocate by opposition.
For, if De Monfort would reject my suit,
Being the man whom Rezenvelt esteems,
Being the man he hates, a cord as strong,
Will he not favour me? I'll think of this.

[Exit.

SCENE III.

A lower Apartment in JEROME'S House, with a wide folding Glass Door, looking into a Garden, where the Trees and Shrubs are brown and leafless.

Enter DE MONFORT, with his Arms crossed, with a thoughtful frowning Aspect, and paces slowly across the Stage, JEROME following behind with a timid Step. DE MONFORT hearing him, turns suddenly about.

De Mon. [Angrily.] Who follows me to this sequester'd room?

Jer. I have presum'd, my lord. 'Tis somewhat late:

I am inform'd you eat at home to-night;
Here is a list of all the dainty fare
My busy search has found; please to peruse it.

De Mon. Leave me: begone! Put hemlock in thy soup,
Or deadly nightshade, or rank hellebore,
And I will mess upon it.

Jer. Heaven forbid!

Your honour's life is all too precious, sure—

De Mon. [*Sternly.*] Did I not say, begone?

Jer. Pardon, my lord, I'm old, and oft forget.

[*Exit.*]

De Mon. [*Looking after him, as if his Heart smote him.*] Why will they thus mistime their foolish zeal?

That I must be so stern?

O! that I were upon some desert coast!

Where howling tempests and the lashing tide

Would stun me into deep and senseless quiet;

As the storm-beaten trav'ler droops his head,

In heavy, dull, lethargic weariness,

And, midst the roar of jarring elements,

Sleeps to awake no more.

What am I grown? All things are hateful to me.

Enter MANUEL.

[*Stamping with his Foot.*] Who bids thee break upon my privacy?

Man. Nay, good my lord! I heard you speak aloud,

And dreamt not, surely, that you were alone.

De Mon. What, dost thou watch, and pin thine ear to holes,

To catch those exclamations of the soul,

Which Heaven alone should hear? Who hir'd thee, pray?

Who basely hir'd thee for a task like this?

Man. My lord, I cannot hold. For fifteen years,
Long troubled years, I have your servant been,
Nor hath the proudest lord in all the realm,
With firmer, with more honourable faith

His sov'reign serv'd, than I have served you ;
But, if my honesty is doubted now,
Let him, who is more faithful, take my place,
And serve you better.

De Mon. Well, be it as thou wilt. Away with thee.
Thy loud-mouth'd boasting is no rule for me
To judge thy merit by.

Enter JEROME hastily, and pulls MANUEL away.

Jer. Come, Manuel, come away ; thou art not
wise.

The stranger must depart, and come again,
For now his honour will not be disturb'd.

[Exit MANUEL, sulkily.]

De Mon. A stranger, saidst thou ?

[Drops his Handkerchief.]

Jer. I did, good sir, but he shall go away ;
You shall not be disturb'd.

[Stooping to lift the Handkerchief.]

You have dropp'd somewhat.

De Mon. *[Preventing him.]* Nay, do not stoop, my
friend ! I pray thee not !

Thou art too old to stoop.—

I am much indebted to thee.—Take this ring—

I love thee better than I seem to do.

I pray thee do it—thank me not.—What stranger ?

Jer. A man who does most earnestly entreat
To see your honour, but I know him not.

De Mon. Then let him enter. *[Exit JEROME.]*

[A Pause.]—Enter GRIMBALD.

You are the stranger who would speak with me ?

Grim. I am so far unfortunate, my lord,
That, though my fortune on your favour hangs,
I am to you a stranger.

De Mon. How may this be ? What can I do for
you ?

Grim. Since thus your lordship does so frankly ask,

The tiresome preface of apology
I will forbear, and tell my tale at once.—
In plodding drudgery I've spent my youth,
A careful penman in another's office;
And now, my master and employer dead,
They seek to set a stripling o'er my head,
And leave me on to drudge, e'en to old age,
Because I have no friend to take my part.
It is an office in your native town,
For I am come from thence, and I am told
You can procure it for me. Thus, my lord,
From the repute of goodness which you bear,
I have presum'd to beg.

De Mon. They have befool'd thee with a false report.

Grim. Alas! I see it is in vain to plead.
Your mind is prepossess'd against a wretch,
Who has, unfortunately for his weal,
Offended the revengeful Rezenvelt.

De Mon. What dost thou say?

Grim. What I, perhaps, had better leave unsaid.
Who will believe my wrongs if I complain?
I am a stranger, Rezenvelt my foe,
Who will believe my wrongs?

De Mon. [*Eagerly catching him by the Coat.*] I will believe them!

Though they were base as basest, vilest deeds,
In ancient record told, I would believe them.
Let not the smallest atom of unworthiness
That he has put upon thee be conceal'd.
Speak boldly, tell it all; for, by the light!
I'll be thy friend, I'll be thy warmest friend,
If he has done thee wrong.

Grim. Nay, pardon me, it were not well advis'd,
If I should speak so freely of the man,
Who will so soon your nearest kinsman be.

De Mon. What canst thou mean by this?

Grim. That Marquis Rezenvelt
Has pledg'd his faith unto your noble sister,
And soon will be the husband of her choice.
So I am told, and so the world believes.

De Mon. 'Tis false! 'tis basely false!
What wretch could drop from his envenom'd tongue
A tale so damn'd?—It chokes my breath—

[*Stamping with his Foot.*] What wretch did tell it thee?

Grim. Nay, every one with whom I have convers'd
Has held the same discourse. I judge it not.
But you, my lord, who with the lady dwell,
You best can tell what her deportment speaks;
Whether her conduct and unguarded words
Belie such rumour.

[*DE MONFORT pauses, staggers backwards, and
sinks into a Chair; then starting up hastily.*

De Mon. Where am I now? 'midst all the cursed
thoughts

That on my soul like stinging scorpions prey'd,
This never came before——Oh, if it be!
The thought will drive me mad.—Was it for this
She urg'd her warm request on bended knee?
Alas! I wept, and thought of sister's love,
No damned love like this.
Fell devil! 'tis hell itself has lent thee aid
To work such sorcery! [*Pauses.*] I'll not believe it.
I must have proof clear as the noon-day sun
For such foul charge as this! Who waits without!

[*Paces up and down furiously agitated.*

Grim. [*Aside.*] What have I done? I've carried
this too far.

I've rous'd a fierce ungovernable madman.

Enter JEROME.

De Mon. [*In a loud angry Voice.*] Where did she
go, at such an early hour,
And with such slight attendance?

Jer. Of whom inquires your honour?

De Mon. Why, of your lady. Said I not my sister?

Jer. The Lady Jane, your sister?

De Mon. [*In a faltering Voice.*] Yes, I did call her so.

Jer. In truth, I cannot tell you where she went. E'en now, from the short beechen walk hard by, I saw her through the garden-gate return.

The Marquis Rezenvelt, and Freberg's Countess Are in her company. This way they come, As being nearer to the back apartments; But I shall stop them, if it be your will, And bid them enter here.

De Mon. No, stop them not. I will remain unseen, And mark them as they pass. Draw back a little.

[GRIMBALD seems alarmed, and steals off unnoticed. DE MONFORT grasps JEROME tightly by the Hand, and drawing back with him Two or Three steps, not to be seen from the Garden, waits in silence with his Eyes fixed on the Glass Door.]

De Mon. I hear their footsteps on the grating sand; How like the croaking of a carrion bird That hateful voice sounds to the distant ear! And now she speaks—her voice sounds cheerly too—O curse their mirth!—

Now, now, they come, keep closer still! keep steady!
[Taking hold of JEROME with both Hands.]

Jer. My lord, you tremble much.

De Mon. What, do I shake?

Jer. You do, in truth, and your teeth chatter too.

De Mon. See! see they come! he strutting by her side.

[JANE, REZENVELT, and COUNTESS FREBERG, appear through the Glass Door, pursuing their Way up a short Walk leading to the other Wing of the House.]

See how he turns his odious face to hers !
Utt'ring with confidence some nauseous jest.
And she endures it too—Oh ! this looks vilely !
Ha ! mark that courteous motion of his arm—
What does he mean?—He dares not take her hand !
[*Pauses and looks eagerly.*

By Heaven and hell he does !

[*Letting go his hold of JEROME, he throws out his Hands vehemently, and thereby pushes him against the Scene.*

Jer. Oh ! I am stunn'd ! my head is crack'd in twain :

Your honour does forget how old I am.

De Mon. Well, well, the wall is harder than I wist.
Begone ! and whine within.

[*Exit JEROME, with a sad rueful Countenance.—*

DE MONFORT comes forward to the Front of the Stage, and makes a long Pause, expressive of great Agony of Mind.

It must be so ; each passing circumstance ;
Her hasty journey here ; her keen distress
Whene'er my soul's abhorrence I express'd ;
Ay, and that damned reconciliation,
With tears extorted from me : Oh, too well !
All, all too well bespeak the shameful tale.
I should have thought of Heav'n and hell conjoin'd,
The morning star mix'd with infernal fire,
Ere I had thought of this—
Hell's blackest magic, in the midnight hour,
With horrid spells and incantation dire,
Such combination opposite, unseemly,
Of fair and loathsome, excellent and base,
Did ne'er produce.—But every thing is possible,
So as it may my misery enhance !
Oh ! I did love her with such pride of soul
When other men, in gayest pursuit of love,
Each beauty follow'd, by her side I stay'd,
Far prouder of a brother's station there,

Than all the favours favour'd lovers boast.
 We quarrell'd once, and when I could no more
 The alter'd coldness of her eye endure,
 I slipp'd o' tiptoe to her chamber-door;
 And when she ask'd who gently knock'd—O! oh!
 Who could have thought of this!

[Throws himself into a Chair, covers his Face with his Hand, and bursts into Tears. After some time he starts up from his seat furiously.]

Hell's direst torment seize th' infernal villain!
 Detested of my soul! I will have vengeance!
 I'll crush thy swelling pride—I'll still thy vaunting—
 I'll do a deed of blood—Why shrink I thus
 If, by some spell or magic sympathy
 Piercing the lifeless figure on that wall
 Could pierce his bosom too would I not cast it?

[Throwing a Dagger against the Wall.]
 Shall groans and blood affright me? No, I'll do it.
 Tho' gasping life beneath my pressure heav'd,
 And my soul shudder'd at the horrid brink,
 I would not flinch—Fie, this recoiling nature!
 O that his sever'd limbs were strew'd in air,
 So as I saw him not!

Enter REZENVELT behind, from the Glass Door. DE MONFORT turns round, and on seeing him starts back, then, drawing his Sword, rushes furiously upon him.

Detested robber; now all forms are over:
 Now open villany, now open hate!
 Defend thy life.

Rez. De Monfort, thou art mad!

De Mon. Speak not, but draw. Now for thy hated life!

[They fight; REZENVELT parries his thrusts with great skill, and at last disarms him.]

Then take my life, black fiend, for hell assists thee.

Rez. No, Monfort, but I'll take away your sword.
 Not as a mark of disrespect to you,

But for your safety. By to-morrow's eve
I'll call on you myself, and give it back;
And then, if I am charg'd with any wrong,
I'll justify myself. Farewell, strange man!

[*Exit.*—DE MONFORT stands for some time quite motionless, like one stupified.

Enter a SERVANT.

De Mon. Ha! who art thou?

Serv. 'Tis I, an' please your honour.

De Mon. [*Staring wildly at him.*] Who art thou?

Serv. Your servant, Jacques.

De Mon. Indeed I know thee not.

Leave me, and when Rezenvelt is gone,
Return and let me know.

Serv. He's gone already, sir.

De Mon. How, gone so soon?

Serv. Yes, as his servant told me.

He was in haste to go, for night comes on,
And at the ev'ning hour he must take horse,
To visit some old friend, whose lonely mansion
Stands a short mile beyond the farther wood;
And, as he loves to wander thro' those wilds,
Whilst yet the early moon may light his way,
He sends his horses round the usual road,
And crosses it alone.

I would not walk thro' those wild dens alone,
For all his wealth. For there, as I have heard,
Foul murders have been done, and ravens scream;
And things unearthly, stalking thro' the night,
Have scar'd the lonely trav'ller from his wits.

[DE MONFORT stands fixed in thought.

I've ta'en your mare, an' please you, from her field,
And wait your farther orders.

[DE MONFORT heeds him not.

Her hoofs are sound, and where the saddle gall'd,
Begins to mend. What further must be done?

[DE MONFORT still heeds him not.

His honour heeds me not. Why should I stay?

De Mon. [*Eagerly, as he is going.*] He goes alone, saidst thou?

Serv. His servant told me so.

De Mon. And at what hour?

Serv. He parts from Amberg by the fall of eve.
Save you, my lord! how chang'd your countenance is!

Are you not well?

De Mon. Yes, I am well: begone!
And wait my orders by the city wall:
I'll that way bend, and speak to thee again.

[*Exit SERVANT.*—*DE MONFORT* walks rapidly
Two or Three Times across the Stage; then
seizes his Dagger from the Wall; looks steadily
at its point, and exit, hastily.]

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

Moonlight.

A Wild Path in a Wood, shaded with Trees.

Enter DE MONFORT, with a strong Expression of Disquiet, mixed with Fear, upon his Face, looking behind him, and bending his Ear to the Ground, as if he listened to something.

De Mon. How hollow groans the earth beneath my tread!

Is there an echo here? Methinks it sounds
As tho' some heavy footstep follow'd me.
I will advance no farther.
Deep settled shadows rest across the path,
And thickly-tangled boughs o'erhang this spot.
O that a tenfold gloom did cover it!
That 'midst the murky darkness I might strike;
As in the wild confusion of a dream,
Things horrid, bloody, terrible, do pass,
As tho' they pass'd not; nor impress the mind
With the fix'd clearness of reality.

[An Owl is heard screaming near him.]

[Starting.] What sound is that?

[Listens, the Owl cries again.]

It is the screech-owl's cry.

Foul bird of night! what spirit guides thee here?

Art thou instinctive drawn to scenes of horror?

I've heard of this.

[Pauses and listens.]

How those fall'n leaves so rustle on the path,
With whisp'ring noise, as tho' the earth around me
Did utter secret things!

The distant river, too, bears to mine ear

A dismal wailing. O mysterious night!

Thou art not silent; many tongues hast thou.

A distant gath'ring blast sounds thro' the wood,

And dark clouds fleetly hasten o'er the sky:

O! that a storm would rise, a raging storm;

Amidst the roar of warring elements

I'd lift my hand, and strike: but this pale light,

The calm distinctness of each stilly thing,

Is terrible. *[Starting.]* Footsteps are near—

He comes, he comes! I'll watch him farther on—

I cannot do it here.

[Exit.]

Enter REZENVELT, and continues his way slowly across the Stage, but just as he is going off, the Owl screams, he stops and listens, and the Owl screams again.

Rez. Ha! does the night-bird greet me on my way?

How much his hooting is in harmony
With such a scene as this! I like it well.
Oft when a boy, at the still twilight hour,
I've leant my back against some knotted oak,
And loudly mimick'd him, till to my call
He answer would return, and thro' the gloom
We friendly converse held.
Between me and the star-bespangled sky
Those aged oaks their crossing branches wave,
And thro' them looks the pale and placid moon.
How like a crocodile, or winged snake,
Yon sailing cloud bears on its dusky length!
And now transformed by the passing wind,
Methinks it seems a flying Pegasus.
Ay, but a shapeless band of blacker hue
Comes swiftly after.—
A hollow murm'ring wind comes thro' the trees;
I hear it from afar; this bodes a storm.
I must not linger here—

[*A Bell heard at some Distance.*]

What bell is this?
It sends a solemn sound upon the breeze.
Now, to a fearful superstitious mind,
In such a scene, 'twould like a death-knell come:
For me it tells but of a shelter near,
And so I bid it welcome.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

The Inside of a Convent Chapel, of old Gothic Architecture, almost dark; Two Torches only are seen at a distance, burning over a new made Grave. The noise of loud wind, beating upon the Windows and Roof, is heard.

Enter Two MONKS.

1 Monk. The storm increases: hark how dismally
It howls along the cloisters! How goes time?

2 Monk. It is the hour: I hear them near at hand;
And when the solemn requiem has been sung
For the departed sister, we'll retire.

Yet, should this tempest still more violent grow,
We'll beg a friendly shelter till the morn.

1 Monk. See, the procession enters: let us join.

[The Organ strikes up a solemn Prelude.]

Enter a Procession of NUNS, with the ABBESS, bearing Torches. After compassing the Grave twice, and remaining there some Time, whilst the Organ plays a Grand Dirge, they advance to the Front of the Stage.

SONG—BY THE NUNS.

*Departed soul, whose poor remains
This hallow'd lowly grave contains;
Whose passing storm of life is o'er,
Whose pains and sorrows are no more!
Bless'd be thou with the bless'd above!
Where all is joy, and purity, and love.*

*Lct him, in might and mercy dread,
 Lord of the living and the dead;
 In whom the stars of heav'n rejoice,
 To whom the ocean lifts his voice,
 Thy spirit purified to glory raise,
 To sing with holy saints his everlasting praise.*

*Departed soul, who in this earthly scene
 Hast our lowly sister been.
 Swift be thy way to where the blessed dwell;
 Until we meet thee there, farewell! farewell!*

*Enter a LAY SISTER, with a wild terrified look, her
 Hair and Dress all scattered, and rushes forward
 amongst them.*

Abb. Why com'st thou here, with such disorder'd
 looks,
 To break upon our sad solemnity?

Sist. Oh! I did hear, thro' the receding blast,
 Such horrid cries; it made my blood run chill!

Abb. 'Tis but the varied voices of the storm,
 Which many times will sound like distant screams:
 It has deceiv'd thee.

Sist. O no, for twice it call'd, so loudly call'd,
 With horrid strength, beyond the pitch of nature.
 And Murder! murder! was the dreadful cry.
 A third time it return'd with feeble strength,
 But o'the sudden ceas'd, as tho' the words
 Were rudely smother'd in the grasped throat;
 And all was still again, save the wild blast
 Which at a distance growl'd—
 Oh! it will never from my mind depart!
 That dreadful cry all i'the instant still'd,
 For then, so near, some horrid deed was done,
 And none to rescue.

Abb. Where didst thou hear it?

Sist. In the higher cells,
As now a window, open'd by the storm,
I did attempt to close.

1 Monk. I wish our Brother Bernard were arriv'd;
He is upon his way.

Abb. Be not alarm'd; it still may be deception.
'Tis meet we finish our solemnity,
Nor show neglect unto the honour'd dead.

[Gives a sign, and the Organ plays again: just as it ceases, a loud knocking is heard without.]

Abb. Ha! who may this be? hush!

[Knocking heard again.]

2 Monk. It is the knock of one in furious haste.
Hush, hush! What footsteps come? Ha! Brother
Bernard.

Enter BERNARD bearing a Lantern.

1 Monk. See, what a look he wears of stiffen'd fear!
Where hast thou been, good brother?

Bern. I've seen a horrid sight!

All. *[Gathering round him, and speaking at once.]*
What hast thou seen?

Bern. As on I hasten'd, bearing thus my light,
Across the path, not fifty paces off,
I saw a murder'd corse stretch'd on its back,
Smear'd with new blood, as tho' but freshly slain.

Abb. A man or woman?

Bern. A man, a man!

Abb. Didst thou examine if within its breast
There yet is lodg'd some small remains of life?
Was it quite dead?

Bern. Naught in the grave is deader.
I look'd but once, yet life did never lodge
In any form so laid.—

A chilly horror seiz'd me, and I fled.

1 Monk. And does the face seem all unknown to
thee?

Bern. The face! I would not on the face have
look'd

For e'en a kingdom's wealth, for all the world.

O no! the bloody neck, the bloody neck!

[Shaking his Head, and shuddering with Horror.

Loud knocking heard without.

Sist. Good mercy; who comes next!

Bern. Not far behind

I left our Brother Thomas on the road;

But then he did repent him as he went,

And threaten'd to return.

2 *Monk.* See, here he comes.

Enter BROTHER THOMAS, with a wild terrified Look.

1 *Monk.* How wild he looks!

Bern. *[Going up to him eagerly.]* What, hast thou
seen it too?

Thom. Yes, yes! It glar'd upon me as it pass'd!

Bern. What glar'd upon thee?

All. *[Gathering round THOMAS, and speaking at once.]* O! what hast thou seen?

Thom. As, striving with the blast, I onward came;
Turning my feeble lantern from the wind,
Its light upon a dreadful visage gleam'd,
Which paus'd, and look'd upon me as it pass'd.
But such a look, such wildness of despair,
Such horror-strained features never yet
Did earthly visage show. I shrunk and shudder'd,
If damned spirits may to earth return,
I've seen it.

Bern. Was there blood upon it?

Thom. Nay, as it pass'd, I did not see its form;
Naught but the horrid face.

Bern. It is the murderer.

1 *Monk.* What way went it?

Thom. I durst not look till I had pass'd it far,
Then turning round, upon the rising bank,

I saw, between me and the paly sky,
A dusky form, tossing and agitated.
I stopp'd to mark it, but, in truth, I found
'Twas but a sapling bending to the wind,
And so I onward hied, and looked no more.

1 *Monk*. But we must look to't; we must follow it:
Our duty so commands. [*To 2d Monk.*] Will you
go, brother?

[*To BERNARD.*] And you, good Bernard?

Bern. If I needs must go.

1 *Monk*. Come, we must all go.

Abb. Heaven be with you, then! [*Exeunt MONKS.*]

Sist. Amen, amen! Good Heaven be with us all!

O what a dreadful night!

Abb. Daughters, retire; peace to the peaceful dead!
Our solemn ceremony now is finish'd. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A large Room in the Convent, very dark.

*Enter the ABBESS, LAY SISTER, bearing a Light, and
several NUNS. SISTER sets down the Light on a Table
at the Bottom of the Stage, so that the Room is still
very gloomy.*

Abb. They have been longer absent than I thought;
I fear he has escap'd them.

1 *Nun*. Heaven forbid!

Sist. No no, found out foul murder ever is,
And the foul murd'rer too.

2 *Nun*. The good Saint Francis will direct their
search;

The blood so near his holy convent shed,
For threefold vengeance calls.

Abb. I hear a noise within the inner court;
They are return'd; [*Listening.*] and Bernard's voice
I hear;

They are return'd.

Sist. Why do I tremble so?
It is not I, who ought to tremble thus.

2 Nun. I hear them at the door.

Bern. [*Without.*] Open the door, I pray thee, Brother Thomas;

I cannot now unhand the prisoner.

All. [*Speaking together, shrinking back from the Door, and staring upon one another.*] He is with them.

[*A Folding Door at the Bottom of the Stage is opened.*]

Enter BERNARD, THOMAS, and the other Two MONKS, carrying Lanterns in their Hands, and bringing in DE MONFORT. They are likewise followed by other MONKS. As they lead forward DE MONFORT, the Light is turned away, so that he is seen obscurely; but when they come to the Front of the Stage, they all turn the light Side of their Lanterns on him at once, and his Face is seen in all the strengthened Horror of Despair, with his Hands and Clothes bloody.

Abb. and Nuns. [*Speaking at once, and starting back.*]
Holy saints be with us!

Bern. [*To ABBESS.*] Behold the man of blood!

Abb. Of misery too; I cannot look upon him.

Bern. [*To NUNS.*] Nay, holy sisters, turn not thus away.

Speak to him, if perchance, he will regard you:
For from his mouth we have no utterance heard,
Save one deep and smother'd exclamation,
When first we seiz'd him.

Abb. [*To DE MONFORT.*] Most miserable man,
how art thou thus? [*Pauses.*]

Thy tongue is silent, but those bloody hands
Do witness horrid things. What is thy name?

De Mon. [*Roused; looks steadfastly at the ABBESS for some Time, then speaking in a short, hurried Voice.*] I have no name.

Abb. [*To BERNARD.*] Do it thyself: I'll speak to him no more.

Sist. O holy saints! that this should be the man,
Who did against his fellow lift the stroke,
Whilst he so loudly call'd.—

Still in mine ear it sounds: O murder! murder!

De Mon. [*Starting.*] He calls again!

Sist. No, he did call, but now his voice is still'd.

'Tis past.

De Mon. [*In great Anguish.*] 'Tis past!

Sist. Yes, it is past, art thou not he who did it?

[*DE MONFORT utters a deep Groan, and is supported from falling by the MONKS. A Noise is heard without.*]

Abb. What noise is this, of heavy, lumb'ring steps,
Like men who with a weighty burden come?

Bern. It is the body: I have orders given
That here it should be laid.

Enter MEN, bearing the Body of REZENVELT, covered with a white Cloth, and set it down in the middle of the Room: they then uncover it. DE MONFORT stands fixed and motionless with horror, only that a sudden Shivering seems to pass over him when they uncover the Corpse. The ABBESS and NUNS shrink back, and retire to some Distance; all the rest fixing their Eyes steadfastly upon DE MONFORT. A long Pause.

Bern. [*To DE MONFORT.*] Seest thou that lifeless
corpse, those bloody wounds?

See how he lies, who but so shortly since
A living creature was, with all the powers

Of sense, and motion, and humanity?

Oh! what a heart had he, who did this deed!

1 Monk. [*Looking at the Body.*] How hard those
teeth against the lips are press'd,
As tho' he struggled still!

2 Monk. The hands, too, clench'd: the last efforts
of nature.

[DE MONFORT *still stands motionless.* BROTHER
THOMAS *then goes to the Body, and raising up
the Head a little, turns it towards DE MON-*
FORT.

Thom. Know'st thou this ghastly face?

De Mon. [*Putting his Hands before his Face, in
violent Perturbation.*

Oh do not! do not! veil it from my sight!

Put me to any agony but this!

Thom. Ha! dost thou then confess the dreadful
deed?

Hast thou against the laws of awful Heav'n
Such horrid murder done? What fiend could tempt
thee?

[*Pauses and looks steadfastly at DE MONFORT.*

De Mon. I hear thy words, but do not hear their
sense—

Hast thou not cover'd it?

Bern. [*To THOMAS.*] Forbear, my brother, for thou
seest right well

He is not in a state to answer thee.

Let us retire, and leave him for a while;

These windows are with iron grated o'er;

He cannot 'scape, and other duty calls.

Thom. Then let it be.

Bern. [*To MONKS, &c.*] Come, let us all depart.

[*Exeunt ABBESS and NUNS, followed by the
MONKS. One MONK lingering a little behind.*

De Mon. All gone! [*Perceiving the MONK.*] O stay
thou here!

Monk. It must not be.

De Mon. I'll give thee gold; I'll make thee rich in gold,

If thou wilt stay e'en but a little while.

Monk. I must not, must not stay.

De Mon. I do conjure thee!

Monk. I dare not stay with thee.

[*Going.*

De Mon. And wilt thou go?

[*Catching hold of him eagerly.*

O! throw thy cloak upon this grisly form!

The unclos'd eyes do stare upon me still.

O do not leave me thus!

[*MONK covers the Body, and exit.*

De Mon. [*Alone, looking at the covered Body, but at a Distance.*]

Alone with thee! but thou art nothing now.

'Tis done, 'tis number'd with the things o'erpast,

'Would! 'would it were to come!

What fated end, what darkly gath'ring cloud

Will close on all this horror?

O that dire madness would unloose my thoughts,

And fill my mind with wildest fantasies,

Dark, restless, terrible! aught, aught but this!

[*Pauses and shudders.*

How with convulsive life he heav'd beneath me,

E'en with the death's wound gor'd. O horrid, horrid!

Methinks I feel him still.—What sound is that;

I heard a smother'd groan.—It is impossible!

[*Looking steadfastly at the Body.*

It moves! it moves! the cloth doth heave and swell.

It moves again.—I cannot suffer this—

Whate'er it be I will uncover it.

[*Runs to the Corpse, and tears of the Cloth in Despair.*

All still beneath.

Naught is there here but fix'd and grisly death.

How sternly fixed! Oh! those glazed eyes!

They look me still. *[Shrinks back with Horror.*
Come, madness! come unto me, senseless death!
I cannot suffer this! Here, rocky wall,
Scatter these brains, or dull them.

*[Runs furiously, and, dashing his Head against the
Wall, falls upon the Floor.*

Enter Two MONKS, hastily.

1 Monk. See; wretched man, he hath destroy'd
himself.

2 Monk. He does but faint. Let us remove him
hence.

1 Monk. We did not well to leave him here alone.

2 Monk. Come, let us bear him to the open air.

[Exeunt, bearing out DE MONFORT.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

Before the Gates of the Convent.

Enter JANE DE MONFORT, FREBERG and MANUEL.
*As they are proceeding towards the Gate, JANE stops
short, and shrinks back.*

Freb. Ha! wherefore? has a sudden illness seiz'd
thee?

Jane. No, no, my friend.—And yet I am very faint—

I dread to enter here!

Man. Ay! so I thought:

For, when between the trees, that abbey tower
First show'd its top, I saw your count'nance change.
But breathe a little here; I'll go before,
And make inquiry at the nearest gate.

Freb. Do so, good Manuel.

[MANUEL goes and knocks at the Gate.

Courage, dear madam: all may yet be well.
Rezenvelt's servant, frighten'd with the storm,
And seeing that his master join'd him not,
As by appointment, at the forest's edge,
Might be alarm'd, and give too ready ear
To an unfounded rumour.

He saw it not; he came not here himself.

Jane. [Looking eagerly to the Gate, where MANUEL talks with the PORTER.]

Ha! see, he talks with some one earnestly.

And seest thou not that motion of his hands?

He stands like one, who hears a horrid tale.

Almighty God! [MANUEL goes into the Convent.

He comes not back, he enters.

Freb. Bear up, my noble friend.

Jane. I will, I will! But this suspense is dreadful!

[A long Pause.

Enter MANUEL from the Convent, and comes forward slowly, with a sad Countenance.

Is this the pace of one, who bears good tidings?

O God! his face doth tell the horrid fact;

There is naught doubtful here.

Freb. How is it, Manuel?

Man. I've seen him through a crevice in his door:
It is indeed my master. [Bursting into Tears.

[JANE faints, and is supported by FREBERG.

Enter ABBESS and several NUNS from the Convent, who gather about her, and apply Remedies. She recovers.

1 Nun. The life returns again.

2 Nun. Yes, she revives.

Abb. [*To FREBERG.*] Let me entreat this noble lady's leave

To lead her in. She seems in great distress:

We would with holy kindness sooth her woe,

And do by her the deeds of christian love.

Freb. Madam, your goodness has my grateful thanks.

[*Excunt, supporting JANE into the Convent.*]

SCENE II.

DE MONFORT is discovered sitting in a thoughtful Posture. He remains so for some Time. His Face afterwards begins to appear agitated, like one whose Mind is harrowed with the severest Thoughts; then, starting from his Seat, he clasps his Hands together, and holds them up to heaven.

De Mon. O that I had ne'er known the light of day!

That filmy darkness on mine eyes had hung,
And clos'd me out from the fair face of nature!
O that my mind, in mental darkness pent,
Had no perception, no distinction known,
Of fair or foul, perfection nor defect;
Nor thought conceiv'd of proud pre-eminence!
O that it had! O that I had been form'd
An idiot from the birth! a senseless changeling,

Who eats his glutton's meal with greedy haste,
Nor knows the hand, who feeds him.—

[Pauses ; then, in a calmer sorrowful Voice.]

What am I now ? how ends the day of life ?
For end it must ; and terrible this gloom,
The storm of horrors that surround its close.
This little term of nature's agony
Will soon be o'er, and what is past is past :
But shall I then, on the dark lap of earth
Lay me to rest, in still unconsciousness,
Like senseless clod that doth no pressure feel
From wearing foot of daily passenger ;
Like steeped rock o'er which the breaking waves
Bellow and foam unheard ? O 'would I could !

Enter MANUEL, who springs forward to his Master, but is checked upon perceiving DE MONFORT draw back and look sternly at him.

Man. My lord, my master ! O my dearest master !

[DE MONFORT still looks at him without speaking.]

Nay, do not thus regard me ; good my lord ?
Speak to me : am I not your faithful Manuel ?

De Mon. *[In a hasty, broken Voice.]* Art thou alone ?

Man. No, sir the Lady Jane is on her way ;
She is not far behind.

De Mon. *[Tossing his Arm over his Head, in an Agony.]*

This is too much ! All I can bear but this !
It must not be.—Run, and prevent her coming.
Say, he who is detain'd a pris'ner here
Is one to her unknown. I now am nothing.
I am a man, of holy claims bereft ;
Out from the pale of social kindred cast ;
Nameless and horrible.—
Tell her, De Monfort far from hence is gone
Into a desolate and distant land,
Ne'er to return again. Fly, tell her this ;
For we must meet no more.

Enter JANE DE MONFORT, bursting into the Chamber, and followed by FREBERG, ABBESS, and several NUNS.

Jane. We must! we must! My brother, O my brother!

[*DE MONFORT turns away his Head, and hides his Face with his Arm. JANE stops short, and, making a great effort, turns to FREBERG, and the others who followed her; and with an Air of Dignity stretches out her Hand, beckoning them to retire. All retire but FREBERG, who seems to hesitate.*

And thou too, Freberg: call it not unkind.

[*Exit FREBERG: JANE and DE MONFORT only remain.*

Jane. My hapless Monfort!

[*DE MONFORT turns round, and looks sorrowfully upon her; she opens her Arms to him, and he, rushing into them, hides his Face upon her Breast, and weeps.*

Jane. Ay, give thy sorrow vent: here may'st thou weep.

De Mon. [*In broken accents.*] Oh! this, my sister, makes me feel again

The kindness of affection.

My mind has in a dreadful storm been toss'd;
Horrid and dark.—I thought to weep no more.—
I've done a deed—But I am human still.

Jane. I know thy suff'rings; leave thy sorrow free:
Thou art with one, who never did upbraid;
Who mourns, who loves thee still.

De Mon. Ah! say'st thou so? no, no; it should not be.

[*Shrinking from her.*] I am a foul and bloody murderer,

For such embrace unmeet. O leave me! leave me!
Disgrace and public shame abide me now;
And all, alas! who do my kindred own

The direful portion share.—Away, away !
Shall a disgrac'd and public criminal
Degrade thy name, and claim affinity
To noble worth like thine?—I have no name—
I am nothing, now, not e'en to thee ; depart.

[She takes his Hand, and grasping it firmly, speaks with a determined Voice.]

Jane. De Monfort, hand in hand we have enjoy'd
The playful term of infancy together ;
And in the rougher path of ripen'd years
We've been each other's stay. Dark lowers our fate,
And terrible the storm that gathers over us ;
But nothing, till that latest agony
Which severs thee from nature, shall unloose
This fix'd and sacred hold. In thy dark prison-house ;
In the terrific face of armed law ;
Yea, on the scaffold, if it needs must be,
I never will forsake thee.

De Mon. *[Looking at her with admiration.]* Heav'n
bless thy generous soul, my noble Jane !

I thought to sink beneath this load of ill,
Depress'd with infamy and open shame ;
I thought to sink in abject wretchedness :
But for thy sake I'll rouse my manhood up,
And meet it bravely ; no unseemly weakness,
I feel my rising strength, shall blot my end,
To clothe thy cheek with shame.

Jane. Yes, thou art noble still.

De Mon. With thee I am ; who were not so with
thee ?

But, ah, my sister ! short will be the term :
Death's stroke will come, and in that state beyond,
Where things unutterable wait the soul,
New from its earthly tenement discharg'd,
We shall be sever'd far.

Far as the spotless purity of virtue
Is from the murd'rer's guilt, far shall we be,

This is the gulf of dread uncertainty,
From which the soul recoils.

Jane. The God who made thee is a God of mercy;
Think upon this.

De Mon. [*Shaking his Head.*] No, no! this blood!
this blood!

Jane. Yea, e'en the sin of blood may be forgiv'n,
When humble penitence hath once aton'd.

De Mon. [*Eagerly.*] What, after terms of lengthened
misery,
Imprison'd anguish of tormented spirit,
Shall I again, a renovated soul,
Into the blessed family of the good
Admittance have? Think'st thou that this may be?
Speak if thou canst: O speak me comfort here!
For dreadful fancies, like an armed host,
Have push'd me to despair. It is most horrible—
O speak of hope! if any hope there be.

[*JANE is silent, and looks sorrowfully upon him;
then clasping her Hands, and turning her Eyes
to heaven, seems to mutter a Prayer.*]

Ha! dost thou pray for me? Heav'n hear thy prayer!
I fain would kneel—Alas! I dare not do it.

Jane. Not so; all, by th' Almighty Father form'd,
May in their deepest mis'ry call on him.
Come, kneel with me, my brother.

[*She kneels and prays to herself; he kneels by her,
and clasps his Hands fervently, but speaks not.
A noise of Chains clanking is heard without, and
they both rise.*]

De Mon. Hear'st thou that noise? They come to
interrupt us.

Jane. [*Moving towards a Side Door.*] Then let us
enter here.

De Mon. [*Catching hold of her with a Look of hor-
ror.*]

Not there—not there—the corpse—the bloody corpse!

Jane. What, lies he there?—Unhappy Rezenvelt!

De Mon. A sudden thought has come across my mind;

How came it not before? Unhappy Rezenvelt!

Say'st thou but this?

Jane. What should I say? he was an honest man; I still have thought him such, as such lament him.

[*DE MONFORT utters a deep Groan.*

What means this heavy groan?

De Mon. It hath a meaning.

Enter ABBESS and MONKS, with Two OFFICERS of Justice, carrying Fetters in their Hands, to put upon DE MONFORT.

Jane. [*Starting.*] What men are these?

1 Offi. Lady, we are the servants of the law, And bear with us a power, which doth constrain To bind with fetters this our prisoner.

[*Pointing to DE MONFORT.*

Jane. A stranger uncondemn'd? this cannot be.

1 Offi. As yet, indeed, he is by law unjudg'd, But is so far condemn'd by circumstance, That law, or custom sacred held as law, Doth fully warrant us, and it must be.

Jane. Nay, say not so; he has no power to escape: Distress hath bound him with a heavy chain; There is no need of yours.

1 Offi. We must perform our office.

Jane. O! do not after this indignity!

1 Offi. Is it indignity in sacred law To bind a murderer? [*To 2 OFFICER.*] Come, do thy work.

Jane. Harsh are thy words, and stern thy harden'd brow;

Dark is thine eye; but all some pity have Unto the last extreme of misery.

I do beseech thee! if thou art a man—

[*Kneeling to him.*

[DE MONFORT, roused at this, runs up to JANE, and raises her hastily from the Ground; then stretches himself up proudly.]

De Mon. [To JANE.] Stand thou erect in native dignity;

And bend to none on earth the suppliant knee,
Though cloth'd in power imperial. To my heart
It gives a feller gripe than many irons.

[Holding out his Hands.] Here, officers of law, bind
on those shackles,

And, if they are too light, bring heavier chains.

Add iron to iron, load, crush me to the ground;

Nay, heap ten thousand weight upon my breast,
For that were best of all.

[A long Pause, whilst they put Irons upon him.]

After they are on, JANE looks at him sorrowfully, and lets her Head sink on her Breast.

DE MONFORT stretches out his Hands, looks at them, and then at JANE; crosses them over his Breast, and endeavours to suppress his Feelings.

1 Offi. I have it, too, in charge to move you hence,
[To DE MONFORT.]

Into another chamber, more secure.

De Mon. Well, I am ready, sir.

[Approaching JANE, whom the ABBESS is endeavouring to comfort, but to no purpose.]

Ah! wherefore thus! most honour'd and most dear!

Shrink not at the accoutrements of ill,

Daring the thing itself. [Endeavouring to look cheerful.]

Wilt thou permit me with a gyved hand?

[She gives him her Hand, which he raises to his Lips.]

This was my proudest office.

[Exeunt, DE MONFORT leading out JANE.]

SCENE III.

A long narrow Gallery in the Convent, with the Doors of the Cells on each Side. The Stage darkened.

A NUN is discovered at a Distance, listening. Enter another NUN at the Front of the Stage, and starts back.

1 *Nun.* Ha! who is this not yet retir'd to rest?
My sister, is it you? *[To the other, who advances.*

2 *Nun.* Returning from the sister Nina's cell,
Passing yon door where the poor pris'ner lies,
The sound of one, who struggled with despair
Struck on me as I went: I stopp'd and listen'd;
O God! such piteous groans!

1 *Nun.* Yes, since the ev'ning sun it hath been so.
The voice of mis'ry oft hath reach'd mine ear,
E'en in the cell above.

2 *Nun.* How is it thus?
Methought he brav'd it with a manly spirit,
And led, with shackled hand, his sister forth,
Like one resolv'd to bear misfortune boldly.

1 *Nun.* Yes, with heroic courage, for a while
He seem'd inspir'd; but, soon depress'd again,
Remorse and dark despair o'erwhelm'd his soul,
And so he hath remain'd.

Enter FATHER BERNARD, advancing from the further End of the Gallery, bearing a Crucifix.

How goes it, father, with your penitent?
We've heard his heavy groans.

Bern. Retire, my daughters ; many a bed of death,
With all its pangs and horror, I have seen,
But never aught like this.

2 Nun. He's dying, then?

Bern. Yes, death is dealing with him.
From violent agitation of the mind,
Some stream of life within his breast has burst ;
For, many times, within a little space,
The ruddy tide has rush'd into his mouth.
God, grant his pains be short!

1 Nun. Amen! amen!

2 Nun. How does the lady?

Bern. She sits and bears his head upon her lap ;
And, like a heaven-inspired angel, speaks
The word of comfort to his troubled soul :
Then does she wipe the cold drops from his brow,
With such a look of tender wretchedness,
It wrings the heart to see her.

1 Nun. Ha! hear ye nothing?

2 Nun. [*Alarmed.*] Yes, I heard a noise.

1 Nun. And seest thou nothing?

[*Creeping close to her* SISTER.]

Bern. 'Tis a nun in white.

Enter LAY SISTER, *in her Night Clothes, advancing
from the dark End of the Gallery.*

[*To* SISTER.] Wherefore, my daughter, hast thou left
thy cell?

It is not meet at this untimely hour.

Sist. I cannot rest. I hear such dismal sounds,
Such wailings in the air, such shrilly shrieks,
As though the cry of murder rose again
From the deep gloom of night. I cannot rest:
I pray you let me stay with you, good sisters!

[*Bell tolls.*]

Nuns. [*Starting.*] What bell is that?

Bern. It is the bell of death.
A holy sister was upon the watch,
To give this notice. [*Bell tolls again.*] Hark! another
knell!

The wretched struggler hath his warfare clos'd;
May Heaven have mercy on him! [*Bell tolls again.*
Retire, my daughters; let us all retire,
For scenes like this to meditation call.

[*Exeunt, Bell tolling again.*]

SCENE IV.

A Hall or large Room in the Convent.

The Bodies of DE MONFORT and REZENVELT are discovered, laid out upon a low Table or Platform, covered with Black. FREBERG, BERNARD, ABBESS, MONKS, and NUNS, attending.

Abb. [*To FREBERG.*] Here must they lie, my lord,
until we know

Respecting this the order of the law.

Freb. And you have wisely done, my rev'rend mother.

[*Goes to the Table, and looks at the Bodies, but without uncovering them.*]

Unhappy men! ye, both in nature rich,
With talents and with virtues were endu'd.
Ye should have lov'd, yet deadly rancour came,
And in the prime and manhood of your days
Ye sleep in horrid death. O direful hate!
What shame and wretchedness his portion is

Who, for a secret inmate, harbours thee!
 And who shall call him blameless, who excites,
 Ungen'rously excites, with careless scorn,
 Such baleful passion in a brother's breast,
 Whom Heav'n commands to love. Low are ye laid:
 Still all contention now.—Low are ye laid.
 I lov'd you both, and mourn your hapless fall.

Abb. They were your friends, my lord?

Freb. I lov'd them both. How does the Lady Jane?

Abb. She bears misfortune with intrepid soul.
 I never saw in woman bow'd with grief
 Such moving dignity.

Freb. Ay, still the same.
 I've known her long; of worth most excellent;
 But, in the day of woe, she ever rose
 Upon the mind with added majesty,
 As the dark mountain more sublimely tow'rs
 Mantled in clouds and storm,

Enter MANUEL and JEROME.

Man. [*Pointing.*] Here, my good Jerome, there's
 a piteous sight.

Jer. A piteous sight! yet I will look upon him:
 I'll see his face in death. Alas, alas!
 I've seen him move a noble gentleman;
 And when with vexing passion undisturb'd,
 He look'd most graciously.

[*Lifts up in mistake the Cloth from the Body of
 REZENVELT, and starts back with Hor-
 ror.*]

Oh! this was bloody work! Oh, oh! oh, oh!
 That human hands could do it!

[*Drops the Cloth again.*]

Man. That is the murder'd corpse: here lies De
 Monfort. [*Going to uncover the Body.*]

Jer. [*Turning away his Head.*] No, no! I cannot look upon him now.

Man. Didst thou not come to see him?

Jer. Fie! cover him—inter him in the dark—
Let no one look upon him.

Bern. [*To JEROME.*] Well dost thou show the abhorrence nature feels
For deeds of blood, and I commend thee well.
In the most ruthless heart compassion wakes
For one who, from the hand of fellow man,
Hath felt such cruelty.

[*Uncovering the Body of REZENVELT.*
This is the murder'd corse,

[*Uncovering the Body of DE MONFORT.*
But see, I pray,
Here lies the murderer! What think'st thou here?
Look on those features, thou hast seen them oft,
With the last dreadful conflict of despair,
So fix'd in horrid strength.
See those knit brows, those hollow, sunken eyes;
The sharpen'd nose, with nostrils all distent;
That writhed mouth, where yet the teeth appear,
In agony, to gnash the nether lip.
Think'st thou, less painful than the murd'rer's knife
Was such a death as this?

Ay, and how changed too those matted locks!

Jer. Merciful Heaven! his hair is grizzly grown,
Chang'd to white age, what was, but two days since,
Black as the raven's plume! How may this be?

Bern. Such change, from violent conflict of the
mind,
Will sometimes come.

Jer. Alas, alas! most wretched!
Thou wert too good to do a cruel deed,
And so it kill'd thee. Thou hast suffer'd for it.
God rest thy soul! I needs must touch thy hand,
And bid thee long farewell.

[*Laying his Hand on DE MONFORT.*

Bern. Draw back, draw back ! see where the lady comes !

Enter JANE DE MONFORT. FREBERG, who has been for some Time retired by himself to the Bottom of the Stage, now steps forward to lead her in, but checks himself on seeing the fixed Sorrow of her Countenance, and draws back respectfully. JANE advances to the Table, and looks attentively at the covered Bodies. MANUEL points out the Body of DE MONFORT, and she gives a gentle Inclination of the Head, to signify that she understands him. She then bends tenderly over it, without speaking.

Man. [To JANE, as she raises her Head.] Oh, madam ! my good lord.

Jane. Well says thy love, my good and faithful Manuel ;

But we must mourn in silence.

Man. Alas ! the times that I have follow'd him !

Jane. Forbear, my faithful Manuel. For this love

Thou hast my grateful thanks ; and here's my hand :
Thou hast lov'd him, and I'll remember thee :
Where'er I am ; in whate'er spot of earth
I linger out the remnant of my days,
I'll remember thee.

Man. Nay, by the living God ! where'er you are,
There will I be. I'll prove a trusty servant :
I'll follow you, e'en to the world's end.
My master's gone, and I, indeed, am mean,
Yet I will show the strength of nobler men,
Should any dare upon your honour'd worth
To put the slightest wrong. Leave you, dear lady !
Kill me, but say not this !

[Throwing himself at her Feet.]

Jane. [*Raising him.*] Well, then! be thou my servant, and my friend.

Art thou, good Jerome, too, in kindness come?
I see thou art. How goes it with thine age?

Jer. Ah, madam! woe and weakness dwell with age:

'Would I could serve you with a young man's strength!

I'd spend my life for you.

Jane. Thanks, worthy Jerome.

O! who hath said, the wretched have no friends!

Freb. In every sensible and gen'rous breast
Affliction finds a friend; but unto thee,
Thou most exalted and most honourable,
The heart in warmest adoration bows,
And even a worship pays.

Jane. Nay, Freberg, Freberg! grieve me not, my friend.

He, to whose ear my praise most welcome was,
Hears it no more; and, oh! our piteous lot!
What tongue will talk of him? Alas, alas!
This more than all will bow me to the earth;
I feel my misery here.
The voice of praise was wont to name us both:
I had no greater pride.

[Covers her Face with her Hands, and bursts into Tears. Here they all hang about her: FREBERG supporting her tenderly; MANUEL embracing her Knees, and old JEROME catching hold of her Robe affectionately. BERNARD, ABBESS, MONKS, and NUNS, likewise gather round her, with Looks of Sympathy.]

Enter Two OFFICERS of Law.

1 *Offi.* Where is the prisoner?
Into our hands he straight must be consign'd.

Bern. He is not subject now to human laws;
The prison, that awaits him, is the grave!

1 Offi. Ha! say'st thou so? there is foul play in
this.

Man. [*To OFFICER.*] Hold thy unrighteous tongue,
or hie thee hence.

Nor, in the presence of this honour'd dame,
Utter the slightest meaning of reproach.

1 Offi. I am an officer on duty call'd,
And have authority to say, how died?

*[Here JANE shakes off the weakness of Grief,
and repressing MANUEL, who is about to
reply to the OFFICER, steps forward with
Dignity.]*

Jane. Tell them, by whose authority you come,
He died that death which best becomes a man
Who is with keenest sense of conscious ill
And deep remorse assail'd, a wounded spirit.
A death that kills the noble and the brave,
And only them. He had no other wound.

1 Offi. And shall I trust to this?

Jane. Do as thou wilt:

To one, who can suspect my simple word,
I have no more reply. Fulfil thine office.

1 Offi. No, lady, I believe your honour'd word,
And will no farther search.

Jane. I thank your courtesy: thanks, thanks to
all!

My rev'rend mother, and ye honour'd maids;
Ye holy men; and you, my faithful friends,
The blessing of the afflicted rest with you:
And He, who to the wretched is most piteous,
Will recompense you.—Freberg, thou art good,
Remove the body of the friend you lov'd,
'Tis Rezenvelt I mean. Take thou this charge:
'Tis meet that, with his noble ancestors,
He lie entomb'd in honourable state.

And now, I have a sad request to make,
Nor will these holy sisters scorn my boon;
That I, within these sacred cloister walls,
May raise a humble, nameless tomb to him,
Who, but for one dark passion, one dire deed,
Had claim'd a record of as noble worth,
As e'er enrich'd the sculptur'd pedestal. [Excunt.

THE END.

POINT OF HONOR



DURIMEL—MY FATHER! IN SUCH A MOMENT!
KIND HEAVEN I THANK THEE.

ACT II.

SCENE II.

THE POINT OF HONOUR:

A PLAY,

IN THREE ACTS;

By CHARLES KEMBLE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

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REMARKS.

The Prologue to this drama, in reference to the author, has the following lines,

“ ————— His muse to-night,
“ On timorous wings has try'd her maiden flight.”

The timidity of a favourite actor may be called in question by some critics ; whilst other observers will readily believe, that an actor's most powerful apprehension, as a dramatist, may arise from that very favour with which the town has already received his efforts on the stage—the dread of sullyng reputation hardly earned, and dearly prized.

It was those fears which, perhaps, induced Mr. C. Kemble to make his first attempt, in the pursuit of literary honours, as a translator.

The “ Point of Honour” is taken from the French : still the term translation should be applied to the work in a limited sense ; for in the dramatic art many talents are requisite towards the introduction of a French play upon an English stage, besides that of correctly changing one language into another.

The audience, and the actors of this country, are so different from those of France, that a much bolder, if not a more elegant, pen is required to animate the colder expression of the last, and to captivate, or delude, the more sober judgment of the first.

The task, necessary for the success of a French play in an English theatre, Mr. C. Kemble has here accomplished: and the reception, which the town gave to the work, has fully repaid him for his labour.

Though the production was announced "a comedy" and in the first acts gave evidence of its claim to that title, yet so skilfully was the passion of fear excited as the concluding scenes approached, that the spectators, forgetting the class of amusement to which they had been invited, trembled for the fate of the hero of the drama, even to the expectation of a tragical catastrophe.

It was only necessary that the subject of this play should not have been presented to the public before, in order to have rendered the exhibition a most popular one.

To invent a new fable, is difficult, and it is still more difficult to treat an old one, so as to bestow upon it the semblance of novelty. The foreign writer employed his utmost skill to give a degree of interest to the story on which this piece is founded, made common to the public of Paris, by the well known afterpiece of the "Deserter".——Mr. C. Kemble had the same disadvantages to contend with, by the same entertainment being equally known to a London audience; and he has been even more successful than the original author, in giving renewed attraction to a familiar tale.

Still, few persons can be present at the "Point of Honour" without feeling a decrease of interest in the scenes before them, in consequence of calling to mind some events in the musical farce just named: and

again, in the much admired opera ballet under the title of the "Deserter of Naples."

There is a number in the "Rambler" which so wisely teaches the danger of imitation to an author, that an extract from it may serve as a lesson to the authors of the present composition, for their instruction, and to their readers for their indulgence; reminding them, that it is much more hazardous to adopt, than to create.

"One of the old poets congratulates himself that he has the untrodden region of Parnassus before him, and that his garland will be gathered from plantations which no writer had yet culled: But the imitator treads a beaten walk, and with all his diligence, can only hope to find a few flowers or branches untouched by his predecessor, the refuse of contempt, or the omission of negligence."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CHAVALIER de ST. FRANC	<i>Mr. Barrymore.</i>
VALCOUR	<i>Mr. Fawcett.</i>
DURIMEL	<i>Mr. C. Kemble.</i>
STEINBERG	<i>Mr. Suett.</i>
FIRST OFFICER	<i>Mr. Trueman.</i>
SECOND OFFICER	<i>Mr. Atkins.</i>
ZENGER	<i>Mr. Klanert.</i>
STEIBEL	<i>Mr. Chippendale.</i>
KEEPER OF THE PRISON	<i>Mr. Abbot.</i>
MRS. MELFORT	<i>Miss Chapman.</i>
BERTHA	<i>Miss De Camp.</i>

The Action passes in a small Town upon the German Frontier.

THE
POINT OF HONOUR.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

*A Room in Mrs. MELFORT's House.—Tables, Chairs,
&c. &c.*

Enter MRS. MELFORT and STEINBERG, meeting.

Stein. So, so, so ! fine times these ! soldiers without end ; infantry, cavalry, dragoons, light troops, huzzars, baggage-waggons, and the devil knows what, pouring in upon us !—Well, I foresaw it all ;—Don't you remember, Mrs. Melfort, what I predicted last Wednesday was two years, when I read you the gazette of the sixth of March ? I foresaw that this would become the seat of war—I foresaw the whole plan as well as they who designed it : I make no doubt, now, but the enemy will compel us to show our joy at their arrival, by a voluntary illumination and public rejoicings.

Mrs. M. Better so than to behold our streets streaming with blood ; and the four corners of our poor little town delivered to the flames.

Stein. What ! admit the foe without resistance ? I love my country, madam ; I am a patriot ;—you understand me ?

Mrs. M. Indeed, sir, I do not; pray explain yourself.

Stein. Well then, madam, the protection you have afforded that young frenchman, whom you have made in a manner one of your family, sufficiently evinces your partiality to his whole nation, and his insolence keep space with your——

Mrs. M. Sir, sir; the person you speak of is a young man of extraordinary merit; he is prudent, economical, intelligent: nor was it possible for me to find a person better calculated to conduct my affairs: add to which, he was unfortunate, and that alone had been sufficient claim on my protection.

Stein. Well, I have done: but you don't know what reports are in circulation—all your friends are shocked at them.

Mrs. M. Reports! and pray what are they?

[Smiling.

Stein. Why, they go so far as to talk of marriage between him and your daughter; and you may well suppose——

Mrs. M. Yes, sir, I can well suppose that such reports are calculated to give uneasiness: and to put an end to them at once, Durimel shall call her wife to-morrow.

Stein. I'm astonished! Why, madam, what can induce you to——

Mrs. M. The reports, of which you were just speaking——reports you know, Mr. Steinberg, are dangerous

Stein. I can bear no more; here's gratitude to the man who generously offered to rid you out of the cares of widowhood.—I did think you would have no objection to me as a son, whatever might be your reason for rejecting me as a husband.

Mrs. M. I believe, sir, you have frequently heard me say, that I thought no sacrifice too great to secure my daughter's happiness: I am now about to do it:

imagine, then, how great must be my satisfaction in reflecting, that instead of raising a blush on my daughter's cheek, in beholding the ceremony of her mother's nuptials, I shall now appear with honour at the celebration of her's.

Stein. Then I have been completely deceived in my expectations? I, who never——

Mrs. M. We cannot know every thing, sir; and he who, in reading a gazette, knows so well how to predict the future revolutions of Europe, often prophecies extremely ill when he reads in the eyes of a young girl—but she is here; I will inform her of what has passed, and should you be fortunate enough to succeed with her, I promise you I will not in any way oppose her inclinations.

Enter BERTHA.

My dear Bertha, you are come very *à-propos*: Mr. Steinberg insists on having you for his wife. What say you? Do you approve of him for your husband?

Bertha. For any thing else in the world—but for a husband—oh, no, dear madam.

Mrs. M. What are your objections?

Bertha. Oh, do not ask me!—you know as well as I do; to you I confide the most secret wishes of my soul—and I have already avowed——

Mrs. M. Proceed.

Bertha. What! name him? Oh, you know him well!

Stein. What! Miss Bertha, a fellow who comes from I don't know where—who has not a shilling to bless himself with—an adventurer; and you can prefer him to me? Really, madam, a prudent mother owes it to her child, not to suffer her to be guilty of so much folly.

Mrs. M. You hear what Mr. Steinberg says, my dear; so answer for yourself.

Stein. Reflect, my dear Miss Bertha, how terrible

it will be to have all my expectations crushed ; I who have lived seven long years in hope.

Bertha. Live so still, my dear Mr. Steinberg ; for all who hope are happy ; and, I fear, you would no longer be so if we were married : our ages, our tastes, our sentiments, all differ ;—we shall live much better as friends ; be generous then—speak to me no more of love, and your friendship will be still the dearer to me.

Stein. [*Sighing.*] Ah ! Miss Bertha, I remember you quite an infant—I watched with rapture the growth of your charms, and now you disdain me ;—you reject me—me who would have left you every thing I have in the world—me who am so old a friend too.

Bertha. Is it not natural, sir, at my age, to prefer a younger friend ?

Stein. Very well, Miss, very well—and so you prefer a beggar—a——If I cared less about you, I could inform you, but I won't ; no, no—I've done—ingratitude is worse than——

Mrs. M. Come, come, no enmity ; my daughter has acquainted you with her sentiments ; then do not blame her, if her heart——

Stein. Don't tell me, don't tell me ; there's nothing but ingratitude upon the face of the earth : how the world's changed !—perverted !—ah ! what's become of your poor deceased husband ? he would not have used me thus—he was my friend—he was a man of good sense and enlightened understanding—it is but too plain he is no longer here.—Bad world !—nothing but ingratitude, cruelty, and treason.

[*Exit STEINBERG, and returns almost immediately unperceived.*]

Mrs. M. His exclamations fatigue me ; [*During this Speech STEINBERG returns, as if about to speak ; but perceiving himself to be the subject of Conversation, retires to a Closet in the Flat, where he overhears the*

rest of the Scene] yet they are excusable; I cannot bear to see distress, even in those who do not respect the sensibility of others.

Stein. 'Tis of me they are talking, and I should like to know their opinion of me—listeners, they say, hear no good of themselves.—I'll try the truth of that remark.

[Goes into the Closet.]

Bertha. What a difference between him and Durimel! Oh! my dear mother, 'tis you who create my happiness and his! what unaffected sincerity he possesses! you were ever decided in his favour, and I derive so much pleasure from that decision, that I sometimes fear a change in your sentiments.—This place is full of envy.

Mrs. M. Banish your fears, my child—I believe him to be worthy of your love; and, in uniting your fortunes, how sweet will it be to me to pay the debt of gratitude I owe him, in a manner so congenial with my feelings! Be to him equable, complaisant, and affable; dispel the smallest cloud which threatens to obscure the sunshine of your peace: women have not force for their inheritance; candour and an affecting softness are their only arms. Avoid caprice; it is the rock, on which our happiness is often wrecked; and in the married state, trifles light, and even imperceptible at first, contain the dreadful seed of dangerous discord:—continue, then, your confidence in me, that my experience may assist you to prevent or dissipate the storms which may arise.

Bertha. I see no clouds, nor do I dread a storm; the sun of happiness shines full upon me, and brightens all my prospects.

Mrs. M. You are now, dear Bertha, on the point of entering into duties, the sweetest, sure, of life, but not the less important: summon, then, all your courage; be prepared for all events; for to-morrow you become the wife of Durimel.

Bertha. With what care, with what anxious tenderness, you watch over my happiness!

Mrs. M. Here he comes: we shall raise him to the very summit of felicity; but I fear the height will turn his brain.

Bertha. 'Tis he; but I dread to—I have not power—I—permit me to withdraw. [Exit *BERTHA*.]

Mrs. M. [Calling.] *Bertha!* *Bertha!*—Ah! she's gone.

Enter DURIMEL.

Why did you not hold her?

Dur. My presence was, perhaps, the occasion of her flight, madam: if so, it would have been a rudeness to have held her. I fear I have interrupted you.

Mrs. M. Not in the least—not in the least; she will not always shun you thus. [Smiling.] Hear me, *Durimel*—it is time to bestow upon your merit, your attachments to our interests, and a sentiment, the rise and growth of which I have with pleasure marked, the sweet reward which you expect, and I, with truth, can say, is but your due. What ails you?—why are you silent?—have you any disagreeable news to communicate?—some delay, some failure, among our correspondents?

Dur. No, madam; your affairs are in a more flourishing condition than ever I remember them; the books, which I delivered to you yesterday, must have convinced you of the truth of what I say.

Mrs. M. What can this mean? to be so sad at such a moment, when all things smile around you! Tell me, *Durimel*, has not your heart a secret presage of the happiness which now awaits you?

Dur. [Sighs.] No, madam; I can no longer cheat myself into a belief that there is any happiness for me.

Mrs. M. Durimel, I am no stranger to your love; the nobleness of your sentiments has acquired my most sincere esteem: then take my daughter—I give her to you—to-morrow she shall be yours.

Dur. Oh, madam! how ignorant are you of the situation of my soul! True, I have dared in secret to cherish the sweet hope. Bertha! I adore her! but, in the name of all your bounty, I conjure you! tell me she sincerely loves—she loves as I love her;—tell me, my benefactress, my guardian angel, tell me! for my future destiny hangs on it.

Mrs. M. If I should tell you, will you be more discreet? more composed? You are no longer the same person.—Yes, dear Durimel, my daughter's heart is yours entirely.

Dur. Then I defy you, Fate!—she loves me! to-morrow I may call her by the tender name of wife: shall I then fly from her, to end my days in sorrow and despair? No! though loss of life should be the price of such supreme delight, I'll stay—I'll die content.

Mrs. M. Die! you have filled my mind with terror. Should you be unfortunate——

Dur. Unfortunate! have you not bestowed your daughter on me? but you do not know me: you might, however, have suspected, that a voluntary exile does not quit the cherished scenes of his birth without a cause: who knows whether a single word will not recal the blind partiality which pleads in my behalf? whether Bertha herself will not reject, nay blush, for having loved me.

Mrs. M. Reject you! Oh! no, dear Durimel; I cannot be deceived; If I have never sought to make you break the silence you have imposed upon yourself, 'twas from a firm conviction that the virtues you possess, could never spring from a corrupted heart: from what you are, I judge of what you have been—what you will be. The husband of Bertha, you be-

come my son ; now guard your secret, or confide it to a mother's breast—you are at liberty to chuse.

Dur. I am unable to resist ;—I was about to quit you.—Start not, but summon all your fortitude to hear, as I must relate my story. Reared far from the tender eyes of a parent, it is but rarely I've enjoyed the blessing of embracing him : at sixteen years of age—deprived of all resource, and animated by the example of my father, I followed the career of arms : in performing the painful duties of my station, my courage never failed ; and yet, how frequent were the occasions to exercise it ! It was my lot to serve under a colonel the most oppressive, the most inflexible, of men : five years of patience had I passed beneath his iron yoke, when, oh ! fatal moment ! unjustly molested, my blood began to boil ; I answered sharply, and received a blow—disgraceful outrage ! which, at this distant period, covers me with blushes.

Mrs. M. Moderate this passion, I entreat you ; it terrifies me.

Dur. No, I could not bear it ; an involuntary motion carried my hand to my sword, and in the moment when I thought vengeance within my reach, I became a slave ; degraded, loaded with irons, and thrust into a dungeon, my only resource was to bribe my guards, and, by a sudden flight, escape the humiliating, loathed ceremony, of asking pardon for an injury received : I was instantly denounced, pursued, declared a deserter, and adjudged to death.

Mrs. M. To death ! oh, Heaven !

Dur. A wandering outcast, I arrived upon the German frontier : Fortune then seemed to smile in offering me an asylum under your hospitable roof, where seven years have rolled away in peace ; but in the happiest moment of my life, the most desired, the war conducts the very regiment hither which bears my sentence : my judges are at your door, madam—once known, my doom is certain.

Mrs. M. Flight would be dangerous.

Dur. Flight! Oh! if I fly I must abandon all that's dear to me: upon such terms life is not worth the having, and I will stay and die with Bertha.

Mrs. M. Conceal yourself within the house; these regiments must soon give place to others; and this asylum, without doubt, is preferable to any.—Haste then, this instant, and conceal yourself.

Dur. But, Bertha——

Mrs. M. Be careful not to let a single word escape you; if you should, her fears will ruin all; we will acquaint her with the danger when it is over: appear before her, but with prudence; do not seem to fear, but let your carriage——

Enter a SERVANT of MRS. MELFORT.

Serv. Madam, the regiments have entered the town—two officers are billeted on us, and here is the order.

Mrs. M. Prepare two chambers instantly, at the far end of the corridor, and let nothing be wanting.

[*Exit SERVANT.*

Dur. Alas! what trouble have I brought upon you! Why did you not place your tenderness on one more fortunate?

Mrs. M. Think you I loved you only when you were happy? do me not so much injustice:—but come;—you must instantly retire to the apartment behind the manufactory.—Calm your terrors—confide in me; and with a mother's anxious care I'll watch over, and conceal your safe retreat from every eye.

[*Exeunt MRS. MELFORT and DURIMEL.*

Enter STEINBERG from the Closet.

Stein. Except mine—what I have just heard will do; 'tis good, very good.—Now, my young Frenchman, I may chance to be even with you; for though I lose my mistress, I shall find my revenge; and will not forego the opportunity.

[*Exit STEINBERG.*

SCENE II.

A Hall.—SERVANTS *cross the Stage with Portmantous.*

Enter ST. FRANC and VALCOUR.

Val. Now, Major, confess ; are we not in high fortune, to fall so snugly under the roof of a handsome widow, whose daughter is an angel ; you shall attack the widow, chevalier ;—methinks I already overhear you in a charming, *tête à tête*, relating the most interesting passages of your youth ; I am told she's a charming woman, and I give you my honour, if (by the description) her daughter were not ten times more to my taste, I should not so easily consign her over to you.

St. F. Valcour, in the pleasure of triumphing over women, you seem to forget that the enemy remains unconquered.

Val. Far from it, my dear Major ; 'tis love alone can make a hero of me :—it amuses, it inflames me : I must be active, and till our duty calls us to the field, how can my busy restless mind find sweeter employment?—this divine creature once subdued, I'll prove a thunderbolt of war.

St. F. And can you then thus coolly meditate——

Val. Coolly, say you ? I'm all on fire ; my heart's in a blaze.

St. F. So it has been in every different town we've entered ; yours is a most uncommon heart, my friend ; the fire so many times experienced, must have reduced it almost to a cinder.

Val. True, Major ; but, phoenix-like, it rises from the ashes, replete with tenfold vigour.

St. F. But consider, Valcour, we are under the roof of a respectable woman, whose daughter is both beautiful and virtuous; think then how disastrous may be the consequences of your irregular and wild desires!

Val. Disastrous! ha! ha! ha!

St. F. Even to yourself, young man! Think you so lightly, then, of bringing misery upon a lovely innocent young creature, whose own simplicity and natural goodness, inspire a confidence in all around her?—think you that remorse, more bitter than the tears you cause to flow, will cease to sting and goad the heart, which for a passing momentary joy, embitters all the future hours of a life, which else, had flown away in peace and virtue? Never believe it:—a widow's cries to the offended Deity, for vengeance on her child's seducer, shall fall in thunder on the wretch, who basely wronged her noble hospitality, and robbed her of the stay and comfort of her age.

Val. Bravo, major! By my honour, the chaplain of the regiment would find it difficult to produce so good a sermon.

St. F. [*With great reserve.*] If you please, sir, we will chuse another subject.

Val. Content, say I; for in spite of all this giddiness, this folly, my heart assures me you are in the right.

St. F. The council appears much irritated at the late desertions.

Val. And not without reason, I think; in three days seven and twenty from one company!—I fear they will make some terrible example, to stop the further progress of the evil.

St. F. And yet, however necessary may be the example, is it not terrible to turn the arms, which oft have gained them victories, against the hearts of those who bore them? Valcour, I am filled with horror at this bloody preparation; the bare mention of a de-

serter chills my very soul : think, then, how dreadful is the charge allotted me, to give the fatal signal for their deaths—to see their straining eyes fixed eagerly on mine, to the last moment, hoping a reprieve—oh ! 'tis too horrible. Their judges should, like me, have risen by length of service from the common ranks—like me have felt the ills which private soldiers feel—then might the life of many a wretch be spared to fight his country's battles still, and call down blessings on them for their mercy.

Val. Why do they not send them home to cultivate their native peaceful vales, and for us reserve the dangers and the glory of the fight ? then would desertion be unknown among us : as prompt as terrible, we should fly to victory ; and the intrepid band might fall in slaughtered heaps upon the bloody plain, but never would desert it. Ah ! here comes our charming hostess ; Allons, Chevalier, I'll introduce you.

Enter MRS. MELFORT.

Chance, dear madam, often disposes of us much better than we could of ourselves ; and we are infinitely her debtors for having thrown us on your hospitable shore ; she has conducted us to the abode of beauty, knowing that we had eyes to distinguish, and hearts disposed to do it homage.

Mrs. M. I know not how to answer to such high flown compliment—the apartments I have ordered to be prepared are ready for your reception ; shall I attend you to them ?

Val. You are a most adorable creature ; and wherever your apartment may chance to be, if you are but our neighbour, we shall be delighted with it. To tell you the truth, I can't bear solitude ; it makes me hypochondriacal ; and you Germans are so fond of lodging one at the end of corridors a mile in length, that I have sometimes, in my melancholy fit, supposed myself the plague, thrust into a remote corner

of the house to prevent my being caught. With a little humouring I'm as gentle as a lamb; but fierce—implacable, if provoked.—But where, madam, is your enchanting daughter? in whose praise no tongue is silent, the power of whose charms all hearts have felt? Why, Major! are you making game of us?

St. F. What extravagance! what folly!

Val. Ah! madam, you do not know the meaning of those impatient shrugs. The mere description of your daughter has bewitched him. Why is she not with you? Why does Love's offspring shun its mother. Have you commanded her absence? I hope not; for if you have, he'll be outrageous: he has been breathing nothing but flames and darts. There, there—don't you see how much he's agitated? Don't think of concealing her from him, for his vehemence is excessive; and, if once enraged, he becomes a madman.

St. F. From what you have just uttered, the lady might fairly infer that you were one already.—I flatter myself, however, madam, that while we have the pleasure of remaining under your roof you will have no cause to complain of the conduct of your guests.

Mrs. M. We shall be friends, I make no doubt; and, to show you that I have no fears on my daughter's account, I will immediately introduce her to you.—Who waits?

Enter SERVANT.

Tell my daughter I wish to speak with her. [*Exit SERVANT.*] Though I assure you I am loath to interrupt her, for 'tis a busy time: to-morrow is to be her wedding-day.

Val. To-morrow! oh, don't think of it; you are too precipitate. Believe me, 'twill be time enough to celebrate the nuptials when we are gone.

St. F. Lose not a moment, madam, in securing her future happiness. The object of her choice and your approbation must needs be worthy of her.

Val. Take care—take care, I tell you! You are

too precipitate. I'll venture to assert she does not prodigiously love her intended spouse.—Come, now, confess, Mrs. Melfort, she is not over head and ears in love with him.

Mrs. M. You'll pardon me—I think she loves him most sincerely.

Val. No—I tell you no; she may, indeed, imagine that she loves him, but I assure you it is no such thing. A husband, you know, my dear ma'am, is a very convenient kind of being: but her love for him is no more to be compared with that, some lovely creatures have felt for me—It was transport—madness—In short, I can't tell you what it was.

Mrs. M. And when your ingratitude brought them again to reason, most bitterly did they lament their folly; did they not, sir?

Val. Why, as to that—

Enter BERTHA.

But here, if I mistake not, comes your daughter. What blooming beauty!—See, Major, what a lovely blush overspreads her cheek! We are happy, madam, in—How soft is this fair hand!

Ber. Reserve for others, I beseech you, sir, these violent expressions of esteem.

St. F. Valcour! for Heaven's sake, consider—

Val. I have done, I have done—I have done, Major; yet to ravish so innocent a favour, cannot, surely, be a crime.

St. F. Let us retire to our apartments: we have no time to lose.

Val. True—you say true. I may be killed to-morrow; so I'll e'en make the most of to-day.—They tell me, my angel, you are going to be married, but, if I may be thought worthy to advise, you will defer——

St. F. I have business with you, and you must come. Every moment, now, is precious.

[VALCOUR suffers himself to be led by ST. FRANC.

Oh! if you have business that must be attended to—She is unacquainted with half her worth! Did you ever see any thing so beautiful, Chevalier? What a complexion! How fine is the turn of that neck! How graceful the whole demeanour! she's a figure for an officer; and then, to throw herself away upon a——But as I have not had the pleasure of knowing the gentleman, I won't abuse him.

St. F. Follow me this instant, Valcour, or I lose all patience.

Val. I come—I come, Chevalier! A little mercy on my bones, dear Major!—Ay, by my honour, a figure for an officer!

St. F. Shame on you, Valcour! You'll bring disgrace upon the name.

[*Exeunt* ST. FRANC and VALCOUR.

Mrs. M. Come, come, my child, let us retire, and avoid his insolence.

Bertha. What are we to expect from the licentious soldiery, when e'en their chiefs, forgetting what is due to female delicacy, can thus disturb the peace of helpless families, and injure those it is their duty to protect.

Enter DURIMEL.

Dur. They are retired, and I may at length appear. With what impatience have I waited for this moment!

Mrs. M. [*Aside.*] Imprudent Durimel! why have you ventured out? If you should be discov——

Bertha. What say you, mother?

Mrs. M. Nothing, my child.

Bertha. But you were about to say something;—and you, too, Durimel, seem agitated. Ah! I am no longer happy! Why did you refuse to appear with me before these officers, your countrymen? Why keep

yourself concealed? Had you been here, they would not have insulted us.

Dur. Insulted you! Have they then dared to——

Mrs. M. Bertha, seek not to be acquainted with his motives: let it content you that I know them—Is not your happiness my only care? Why, then, persist in an inquiry?

Bertha. I have done, dear madam; in all I will obey you.

Mrs. M. Give me your hand then—yours, Bertha; with all my soul I give her to you—May every future hour of your lives bring a fresh tribute of felicity, and this happy union of two virtuous hearts draw down upon you Heaven's choicest blessings!

Dur. Oh, Bertha! are you then mine? [*kneels and kisses BERTHA'S Hand.*]

Enter VALCOUR behind them.

Val. I have made my escape at last from that merciless Major, and may now return to the——[*Sees DURIMEL kissing the hand of BERTHA, runs and taps him on the shoulder*]*—*Very well young man; very well, indeed.

Dur. Sir!

Mrs. M. Oh, Heaven protect him!—Should he be known——

Val. So, so, ladies; it was to play me this pretty trick, you lodged me in the Antipodes; I'm your very humble servant—It was cruel though to banish me to the end of the world, when you knew I was so desirous of being your neighbour: this I presume is the intended—ha! his air is not so Germanic as I expected. By my honour, such a spark may be dangerous!—And do you, seriously, friend, intend to enter the lists with me?

[*DURIMEL smiles in contempt, and turns up the Stage.*]

Mrs. M. You are uncivil, sir; your apartment is

provided for you, and I must insist on your retiring.

Val. 'Tis into the heart of this lovely creature I would retire—I will accept no other asylum. Incomparable woman, behold at your feet——[*Kneels, attempts to take her hand—DURIMEL comes between them.*] Well, sir, whom do you stare at?

Dur. Do not provoke me to reply.

Val. What! are you about to be impertinent?

Dur. No, sir; but I will punish your presumption, spite of the uniform which you disgrace.

Val. A menace, by the honour of a soldier! You are not a German, I perceive.

Dur. Painful silence! how my blood boils!

[*Aside.*

Mrs. M. Durimel! withdraw, I beg of you.

Bertha. Do, if you love me, Durimel.

Dur. Let my compliance prove my love—but think not to escape unpunished, sir; the time may yet arrive, when you shall dearly mourn this insolence

[*Exeunt DURIMEL and BERTHA.*

Val. Ah! my fair fugitive; you must not thus escape me.

[*Runs after BERTHA.*

Mrs. M. [*Holding him.*] What are you about, sir? By what authority do you presume to treat us thus? I no longer esteem you as a man of honour; and be assured I will make known your conduct through the town.

Val. By the honour of a soldier, ma'am, you are extremely strong in the wrist—methinks you make too great a fuss about so trifling an affair. If you exclaim so violently on my first approaches to the town, what will you say when it capitulates!

Mrs. M. To such language it is impossible for me to reply. Go, sir; and know, that the heaviest misfortune of the war, in our estimation, is the necessity we are under of admitting you beneath our roof.

[*Exit Mrs. MELFORT.*

Val. Ha! ha! ha! our worthy hostess is in a fury; and, on reflection, I don't much wonder at it: I am too volatile—but what the devil can a man do in a strange place like this, if he does not make himself agreeable to the ladies? But have I made myself agreeable? I fear not—it is no matter—I shall be more successful in my next attempt—Strange fellow this intended husband! Well, I won't kill him; but I'm resolved to pursue the adventure, as well to punish his impertinence as to procure myself amusement: for a garrison town, without entertainment, is the devil; and if I had not constantly affairs of gallantry or honour on my hands, I should die in a week of the spleen. [Exit.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Room in Mrs. MELFORT's House.

ST. FRANC and Mrs. MELFORT discovered seated.

St. F. I ask a thousand pardons, madam, for the behaviour of my young friend; his spirits often run away with him; yet, I do not think he would, upon deliberation, act dishonourably; let me, therefore, entreat you to overlook the present rudeness, and I give you my honour that, for the future——

Mrs. M. It is entirely forgotten: if his conduct

has occasioned us uneasiness, your goodness and civility have made us full amends: did your companions but resemble you, we should endure the evils of the war with greater resignation.

St. F. Youth can alone excuse the thoughtlessness which makes a mere amusement of a profession in itself so serious, in which even our success should cause our tears to flow. Is it not enough to obey the terrible necessity which commands us in the fight to shut our ears against the cries of nature and of pity; but we must, even in our hours of relaxation, wound the hearts of those who give us shelter? How painful are to me the duties of the war! How pleasurable those of peace! For I may then fulfil the ardent wishes of my soul; and, in some measure, repair the dreadful ills of which I have been the blind and fatal instrument,—by solacing the woes of suffering humanity.

Mrs. M. With such noble feelings how many bleeding wounds you must have closed! How many bitter tears have dried! you should be happy, sir.

St. F. The number of the happy is but small—necessity at first induced me to take arms, and it has ever been to me a hard duty. I have, indeed, attained to a condition much above my birth; yet, still, I cannot say that I am happy.

Mrs. M. And yet the rank you hold may give advantages many might envy.—An officer, on more than one occasion, acts a distinguished part.

St. F. True, madam; many an officer would think the rank which I possess an ample recompence for a life of service: how then must I be gratified, who have risen to it from the lowest situation in the army? Incorporated these five years with a different regiment from that in which I learned the rudiments of war; almost the only one who'scaped the dreadful scythe of war, which mowed down my companions, it was my chance to gather laurels, round which fell envy's ser-

pents twined, and raised up enemies against me more implacable, more dangerous, than any I e'er encountered in the field ! Would you believe, madam, that even those, who, by their birth alone, hold equal rank, can scarce endure to see me by their side ? Would you believe I often hear them saying, in contempt, " He's but an officer of fortune ! " Heartless, unfeeling men ! they remember well the obscurity of my origin, but forget the scars with which my breast is covered.

Mrs. M. What, sir, can warriors then feel envy ?—Warriors, who, together, follow the glorious career of arms, and serve one common mother ! Oh, it cannot be.

St. F. It is too true ; but that is not the grief which preys upon my heart—Reason lifts me far above such pitiful injustice, too common among men, and teaches me to view their little passions with disdain.—More secret pains consume me ; real ones, alas ! the offspring, not of ambition, but of nature.—Pardon me, madam, I should not grieve in your presence, nor trouble the serenity of your mind—you seem happy—you have a child, the joy, the comfort of her mother—you are about to marry her.

Mrs. M. I am, sir : the youth to whom she is destined possesses the most amiable qualities ; and, though his fortunes are inferior to my daughter's, yet, by his virtues, he is more than equal to her.

St. F. Then he is worthy of her, and you are surely blessed.

Mrs. M. Ah ! sir, appearances are oftentimes deceitful—every one has griefs, and concealment but aggravates the pain which they occasion—yet—yet—there are often reasons that forbid a confidence, which we find ourselves disposed to hazard. [ST. FRANC weeps.] Your pardon, sir ; I've given you uneasiness.

St. F. I feel most sensibly what you have just said, madam ; I feel we often burn with a desire of

pouring out the soul before some faithful friend, whose sympathizing tenderness may sooth the woes with which it is oppressed—'tis such a friend I need:—the dear companions of my early years have sunk, before me, to the grave; and now, when I am on the point of following them, shall I contract new friendships but to see them broken?—I am entirely surrounded by ambitious rivals, or young men profoundly occupied with trifles; can I, then, to such as these, confide my cares?—Oh, no! you are a mother, madam; your heart should be responsive to my own:—shall I, then, discover—yet wherefore should I grieve you—wherefore tell you woes, which you may pity, but cannot relieve.

Mrs. M. Though they admit not of a cure, it will be some relief to utter them; and pity's gentle aid may——

St. F. I am, indeed, a being to be pitied—none know how much!—What are to me the honours I enjoy?—the pleasures which attend my situation! I had a son, madam; a son, who was to me most dear; his birth was welcomed by nature, for I had only tears at that time to bestow on him; but now, when fortune smiles upon me—when I have it in my power to make him happy, I can no where find him—I can gain no tidings of him:—No; I have lost him; and in such a manner as makes me almost wish he never may again be found.

[Loud Rolls of Drums, accompanied by Fifes.]

Enter BERTHA.

Bertha. Help, help! Fly, fly to his assistance—oh! mother!

Mrs. M. What is the matter?

St. F. Speak! explain!

Bertha. A guard of soldiers have seized on Duri-mel——

Mrs. M. Oh, Heaven!

Bertha. And, with brutal violence, tear him from us, as if he had been guilty of some crime.

Mrs. M. Oh, sir! save him! your authority may set him free—embrace his cause, or——

St. F. I will espouse his cause—but, tell me, wherefore is he arrested?

Mrs. M. Alas! my daughter! I tremble to declare before her—retire, dear *Bertha*; leave us for an instant—retire, I beseech you, and confide in me.

Bertha. Still, still this mystery! why am I kept in ignorance? if this concealment last, my heart will break.

[*Exit BERTHA.*

Mrs. M. [*Kneels.*] You, sir, are now my only hope—Oh! how could they discover his retreat! in Heaven and you I trust: Oh! save him, if it be possible—he is a deserter from your regiment.

St. F. Gracious Heaven! how have you shaken me! my heart is still more torn—more agonized than yours. How often have I sunk with terror, lest in some wretch, like this, I should discover my unhappy boy. Oh, God! thou knowest how anxiously I wish to see him, yet how I tremble to regain him. Should this be he—dear, cruel hope! uncertainty is insupportable; I run, I fly to end it.

[*Exit ST. FRANC.*

Mrs. M. What combats must I now sustain! what terrors stifle! Oh! Heaven, give me courage—what brings *Steinberg* here?

Enter BERTHA and STEINBERG.

Bertha. Here is my mother, sir,—now, what of *Durimel*?

Stein. Bless my soul, what a hurry you are in! if I were going to be shot now, you would be quite calm;—did I not always tell you he would come to no good?—you would not listen to my counsels when you might, and now it's too late. I suppose, by this time, you know the whole story of his being taken to

the guardhouse, and immediately recognized by an old serjeant.

Mrs. M. Come, come, my Bertha, we'll leave him; he only wishes to afflict us.

[Endeavours to lead BERTHA away.]

Bertha. No, I will stay; for nothing I can learn will pain me more than this suspense.

Mrs. M. Oh! my dear child, pray to be ignorant of it—you will know it but too soon—arm yourself with courage—your unfortunate Durimel——

Bertha. Well?——

[MRS. MELFORT endeavours to speak, but cannot.]

Stein. Doesn't she know that he's a deserter?

Bertha. A deserter! Oh, Heaven!

[Falls on her Mother's Neck.]

Stein. Yes; 'twas the young officer that is billeted upon you, who informed against him—he is before the council of war now; and, by this time, the whole affair is settled:—'tis impossible he should get off; and, to-morrow, on the parade, he will be——

Mrs. M. Leave the house, and never let me see you more;—wicked, revengeful man! who triumph'st in the evils which oppress us, go and leave us to our torments.

Stein. Is it my fault that he is a deserter? I can't help his being shot, can I?

Mrs. M. No reply, sir; I will be obeyed.

Stein. Well, I'm going.—Bless my soul, how hasty they are? The daughter is in a hurry to let me in, and the mother to turn me out: I think I'm even with my young rival though; he'll find I don't suffer an enemy to forage on my territory with impunity.

[Exit STEINBERG.]

Bertha. The dreadful secret is at last revealed, and Durimel is a deserter!—already he may be condemned, and about to suffer. Oh! cruel, cruel judges! will not my tears appease you?

Mrs. M. Compose yourself, my dearest child!

things are not so desperate as you imagine—the old officer has promised to espouse his cause; I expect him every instant:—oh, then, be calm; and learn to bear the sad vicissitudes of life.

Bertha. Durimel! Durimel! what are thy present thoughts? does not thy heart now call on me? methinks I dread to see thee; feelings, before unknown, now rush into my soul, and fill it with despair and horror.

Enter VALCOUR.

Mrs. M. What do I see! Oh! let us fly.

Val. You see a man oppressed by grief and wonder.

Bertha. Monster! we curse the hour when first you passed the threshold of our door.

Mrs. M. How could you be so base, so cruel, as to betray a poor unhappy youth it should have been your pride to have protected? *[Going.*

Val. Who? I betray! Stay, I entreat you, stay;—you know but little of my heart—'tis my own fault; perhaps I have been indiscreet; but I swear to you, by the honour of a man, that I was ignorant of the arrest till I beheld him at the council. Oh! had you entrusted his unhappy fate to me, I might, I would have saved him.

Bertha. It was not by your order, then, he was arrested?

Val. Cease, madam, I conjure you, to impute to me a crime so odious—I should blush to combat such a charge; if I had power to save, not one of them should perish. But I lose time; the colonel under whom he served is my own father—Do not despair—I will throw myself at his feet, embrace his knees, solicit and obtain a pardon—no repose, no tranquillity for me, till I have freed your lover, and restored him to your longing arms: 'tis thus I will be revenged on your suspicions; 'tis thus I will compel

you to confess, that levity is not incompatible with feeling, nor gallantry with virtue. [Exit.

Bertha. Think you we may hope, mother?

Mrs. M. We are not yet certain of his fate.

Bertha. Oh! let us fly to him—he wants us now—my heart's tormented, and I judge of his sensations by my own. If he must die, oh, let thy mercy, Heaven, strike me first, and end my wretched, wretched being. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A Room.

Enter ST. FRANC.

St. F. The only blow I dreaded has fallen and crushed my every hope. Impenetrable Providence! how dark, how sorrowful, hast thou rendered the end of my career. Alas! to find him was the only hope which cheered the prospect of my declining days: but to find him thus—oh! when my hand guided in peace his early years, how far was I from thinking that the same fatal hand would one day give the signal for his death—why was he not snatched from me when, sick and languishing in his cradle, I wearied Heaven with prayers for his recovery? I then had escaped the horrors of this moment—Alas! I knew not what I then demanded! I knew not I implored for woes, whose bitter pangs would burst my poor old heart——

Enter MRS. MELFORT.

Oh! spare me, madam, spare me! I saw him, I knew him;—yes, he is my son.

Mrs. M. Merciful Providence!

St. F. Misfortune's cruel shafts at me alone are levelled; but I may now defy the malice of my fate, for I no more am vulnerable. I shall soon become acquainted with my son; if he possess a noble mind, he will know how to die—my task will then be easy.

Mrs. M. Are you not one of his judges, are you not his father? surely that title, and the service you have rendered to your country——

St. F. Will not avail—Justice is inflexible, and knows no distinction: it is sacred only while it is blind.

Mrs. M. Surely the colonel under whom he served——

St. F. He is my most inveterate enemy, and deaf to entreaties: then constancy support this drooping heart—No more shall these white hairs be humbled to the dust—no more my earnest prayers be spurned—Oh! no—fierce and inexorable, should I again implore, his malice would but triumph in my woes, and hasten the doom of my unhappy boy. I have saved many; but thou, poor wretch! wilt not escape, because thou art my son.

Mrs. M. Did he know you at the council?

St. F. No, madam; he has not seen me since his childhood; and was as far from thinking me in the station which I hold, as they who surrounded us were from suspecting him to be my son—it was a trying moment—yet, in my grief, I tasted of some joy; my heart was satisfied of his courage; and with pride I owned the blood which flowed in his veins—no meanness, no humiliation, to obtain his life: he answered to their interrogatories without boldness, without fear: I too suppressed, with painful art, feelings which struggled to burst forth, and saw him doomed without a groan.

Mrs. M. Oh! how could you restrain the joy of making yourself known to your unhappy son? sure such a scene had melted the stern hearts of those who

doomed him, and they had given him free to the long-wished embrace of a dear father.

St. F. You know them not; all I could obtain for him was leave once more to visit this loved mansion: nor could I gain even that, till I had bound myself in the most solemn manner to answer for his person. Had I found a son unworthy of me, he never should have known his father; but, as he is, why comes he not?—why is he not already in my arms?—Oh! I will clasp him to a fond father's heaving breast, acknowledge, and then drown him with my tears.

Mrs. M. Shall I then see him once again? Oh, Heaven!

St. F. I die with impatience to behold him, yet dread the moment of his arrival—I wish to be alone with him: then let me beg we may not meet with interruption: above all, keep your daughter from us till our interview be ended, then we will join you—Hark! I hear the tread of feet:—he comes, he comes: leave me, madam, leave me, I entreat you.

[*Exit MRS. MELFORT.*

Enter DURIMEL.

Oh, Heaven! let me but live a little while; and I with pleasure will resign the unhappy remnant of my days.

Dur. My longing eyes in vain seek Bertha: I fear to meet, yet cannot die in peace till I behold her. She can console me for my sufferings; she—she alone. But she flies me, dreads to encounter, and abandons me to my fate.—'Tis to you, sir, I am indebted for the liberty I now enjoy of once again beholding these dear scenes of happier days. They are fled. I have to entreat that to this kindness you will add another; 'tis in your power, and I am confident you will. You seemed, of all my judges, most touched at my misfortunes: they are great, alas! You see me weep, but 'tis not for myself. Oh, my unhappy father! what will

become of thee, should Heaven have prolonged thy days? Thy poor old heart will surely break, when thou shalt hear my lamentable end! [*Takes out a Letter.*] Grant, Heaven, the sentiments expressed in this may sooth the agonies which he must feel! He shall find I followed the noble precepts he instilled into my soul; and, to the last moment, cherished virtue, honour, and religion.

St. F. What do I suffer! [*Aside.*]

Dur. The name of my father is the only assistance I can give you in the search. He serves in a regiment which, having suffered greatly, has been since incorporated with another; the name of which I do not know. I entreat you not to neglect it. You have, perhaps, a son; if so——

St. F. I have! I have!

Dur. Then, by the love you bear him, I conjure you to be active in your inquiries after my dear, loved father. Promise me this, and I shall die in peace.

St. F. Give me the letter. [*DURIMEL gives the Letter; ST. FRANC reads it. DURIMEL fixes his Eyes stedfastly on him; and ST. FRANC, extending his trembling Arms, exclaims*] My poor, poor Charles!

Dur. Oh, Heaven! is it possible that——

St. F. What! dost thou hesitate? For many a year thou hast eluded my embrace; then torture me no more, but fly, at length, into these old fond arms, and clasp, oh, clasp thy father!

[*They rush into each other's Arms, and remain for some Time silent.*]

Dur. My father! in such a moment! Kind Heaven, I thank thee!

[*Falls at ST. FRANC's Feet, and embraces his Knees.*]

St. F. Dost thou forget the moment which must follow? Charles, wilt thou preserve this courage to the last?

Dur. I have resolved it. Yet should some fond regret linger about my breast, and shake the firmness of my soul, it is from you, my father, I expect a look which shall recall the courage of your son, and teach him how to die.

St. F. Dost thou not know 'tis I must give the signal for thy death; Heaven knows, many a poor wretch, like thee, has found in me a father. In each of them I thought that I embraced a son. Shall I, then, lose the fruit of all the pains I have endured? Oh, no! 'twill cost my life; but all that should endear it to me will be lost; and I shall bless the pitying hand that strikes, and puts a period to my woes.

Dur. I was about to die in peace; but now the love of life revives within my breast, and all my resolution staggers. I have found a father! Scarce have I time to bathe his venerable hand with tears of joy, when pitiless fate summons me to the spot where my grave already is prepared.

St. F. Thy griefs are great—I feel them all; together we must learn to conquer them: then murmur not, but unto Providence submit——

Dur. I will submit—without a groan I'll die. This seems to me an easy task: but, without a murmur, to renounce the blessings which awaited—the dearest object of my affections—is far beyond my strength: then give her to me—let me but call her wife, and then——

St. F. Well, be it so. Your marriage may be solemnized.—Heaven forbids not hope: it is the only treasure of the wretched, then who could be so savage as to rob them of it?—But say, my son—what sacrifice hast thou yet made to offer to that God, before whose awful throne thou shortly must appear? 'Tis not enough to yield submissive to the blow which we cannot avoid: another sacrifice is necessary—a voluntary sacrifice: the following hour is almost thy last, yet hast thou dared to dedicate it to another.

Dur. Oh, my dear father! can we offend the Being we adore, by ties so pure—when formed, too, in his sacred name? Together we will bless him, for thus permitting us to be united before our everlasting separation. Think not that selfishness inspires the wish; oh, no! the motive is more pure—more worthy. When I shall be no more, what sympathising friend will dry my Bertha's falling tears—will sooth my father's bitter anguish? Our marriage solemnized, she finds in you a father—you have still a child; and I shall then submit with humble resignation to my fate.

St. F. What, if this moment thou wert ordered forth?—what, if thou shouldst no more behold thy Bertha?—wouldst thou with firm and manly step march forth to undergo thy sentence?

Dur. If you, my father, should command it—If such must be my fate——

St. F. Well?

Dur. A sigh would sure break forth, but still I would submit.

St. F. Then follow me, my son—follow thy father to the fatal spot; for thou must die within this hour.

Dur. Die! Oh, Heaven!

St. F. Let us quit the house without tumult. Avoid the cries, the tears, the wild despair of these beloved innocents, and meet thy fate without the pangs of parting.

Dur. Oh, God! my heart is breaking!

St. F. Dost thou follow, Charles?

Dur. An instant, dearest father—but an instant!

St. F. Thou tremblest;—thy courage falters, and thy promise was above thy strength.

Dur. It was—it was! [*After a Struggle.*] yet still I will perform it. Oh, Heaven! accept the agonies of a torn heart. Bertha! beloved Bertha! what will become of thee? We should have been united—Oh, cruel separation!—But though thou art not suf-

ferred to hear my parting words, I will be near thee still;—death has no empire o'er the soul, and mine shall hover round thee.—Now—now, my father, seize these trembling hands, and tear me from the spot!

St. F. Hold, Charles—it is enough; the sacrifice is now accomplished, and Heaven demands no more. Thou shalt again behold thy Bertha, and to thy grave bear with thee the sacred name of husband. Enjoy the happiness which still awaits you, and forget the fatal hour we expect, until it sound.

Dur. You have recalled me from the tomb! Shall I again behold her—again enfold her in these arms?—Oh, Heaven! when the last hour shall arrive, my father, dread not to encounter your now happy son; he will be ready; and when the heavy, awful drum shall roll the signal for his death, without a sigh he'll bend him to his fate, and not disgrace his sire.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

STEINBERG'S House.

Enter STEINBERG in a Morning Gown and Slippers, as if hastily roused from his Bed; speaks as he enters to ZENGER, who follows him.

Stein. [*With a Letter in his Hand.*] Very well, it is all very well—I'll give you the answer directly [*Exit. ZENGER*].—What can this mean; I hope he has not

heard of the improper use I made of his name ; if he should, I am ruined—let me see—let me see—

[Reads.] *Sir, Unless you instantly send the most satisfactory and submissive apology for the insult you have put upon me, I shall send those who will bestow on you the chastisement your insolence deserves: I would inflict it in person ; but you have so far degraded yourself by your unmanly conduct, that I scorn descending even to punish you.*

VALCOUR.

Oh dear, oh dear ! what will become of me ? what shall I do ?—If I send the apology, 'twill be a confession of my infamy, and the entire ruin of my credit will ensue—If, on the other hand, I do not send, I shall have my throat cut by a black-looking grenadier as high as a halberd.—Oh dear ! oh dear ! what shall I do to get out of this alarming scrape ?—I had better make my escape—Matthias !—Zenger ! The intelligence I have conveyed to the troops who have just quitted the town, respecting those who now occupy it, will insure me a favourable reception with them—why Zenger ! Zenger ! I say.

Enter ZENGER.

Zenger. Bless me, sir, what ails you ? how alarmed you look !—why, you are quite pale ! what has terrified you so ?

Stein. Alarmed—pale ! why 'tis enough to make a man pale, to be dragged out of bed in the middle of his first sleep—terrified, indeed ! my courage, I believe, was never doubted.

Zenger. Ah ! now you are yourself again—but, sir, have you written an answer to the letter I gave you just now ; the man who brought it is quite impatient to begone ; he says his master will murder him if he stays.

Stein. I'm all over in a cold sweat.

Zenger. Lord, sir, how your colour comes and goes to-day ! why, now you are as white as a sheet again.

Stein. Am I? how odd that is now! my cheeks quite burn.

Zenger. What shall I say to the young man?—he dares not stay any longer—his master is so very passionate.

Stein. [*Aside.*] I'm glad of it—I shall gain time by this at any rate—you may tell the young man he need not wait—I'll send you with the answer when it is ready—and, do you hear, make all the haste you can in packing up, for I am resolved to leave town this very day.—[*Exit ZENGER.*]—Bless my soul! these soldiers are so hasty [*Loud Knocking.*] Oh, Lord! Oh, what's that? If he should already have sent his myrmidons—

Enter ZENGER, showing in Two OFFICERS;—speaks as he enters.

Zenger. This way, gentlemen—there is my master.

[*Exit ZENGER.*

Stein. Soldiers! Oh! I'm a dead man.

1st Offi. We wait on you, sir, in consequence of a letter——

Stein. Yes, sir, a letter—What will become of me? —[*Aside.*] I was just considering——

1 Offi. The business requires no consideration: an immediate answer is all we want.

Stein. I had better make the apology at once, for I may then have a chance of escaping in a whole skin [*Aside.*] Well, gentlemen, your commands shall be obey'd—I will write the answer directly.

1 Offi. You need not give yourself that trouble; all we demand is a verbal answer to a very simple question:—Do you acknowledge this to be your writing?—your name, I think, is Augustus Steinberg?
[*Taking out a Letter.*

Stein. Yes sir, Augustus is my name.—Why, what a mistake have I made! 'tis quite a different business I find—some contract for the army I suppose. [*Aside.*

2 *Offi.* And that you confess to be your hand writing?

Stein. Yes, that certainly is my writing: I could swear to it by the A's and the G's—no one forms the letter A as I do.

1 *Offi.* Enough, sir—you will have the goodness to accompany us to the council of war, which is now sitting, in expectation of your arrival.

Stein. Yes, yes—'tis certainly some contract—Oh, sir, they do me too much honour—but I am such a figure, that I really feel ashamed to——Permit me just to change——

1 *Offi.* Upon these occasions the etiquette of dress is in general overlooked.—You must remain, and affix seals to all the doors in our absence.

2 *Offi.* I'll see it done.

Stein. Seals upon my doors! what for?

1 *Offi.* It is the custom with us, whenever we suspect a person of conveying information to our enemies.

Stein. I hope, gentlemen, you don't suspect me of such wickedness?

2 *Offi.* Oh, no, we don't suspect—we have proof.

Stein. Proof! oh, the malice of this world! Gentlemen, if you will but grant me a little time, you shall see how clearly I'll refute the charge, and cover my enemies with confusion.

1 *Offi.* Soldiers, though severe, are just—the opportunity of clearing yourself will not be wanting—but yours must be a most ingenious defence, to invalidate the powerful evidence contained in this epistle which you have just confessed was written by yourself.

Stein. I made a mistake—'tis all a forgery! I'll take my oath 'tis not my writing.

1 *Offi.* Nay, nay—there can be no mistake—you know you could swear to it by the A's and the G's.

Stein. It is a plot upon me.

1 *Offi.* No one forms the letter A as you do.

Stein. Miserable man that I am ! why did I ever learn to write ?

Offi. Away, away, away !

[*Excunt.*

SCENE II.

A Prison.

A Lamp nearly extinguished ;—Day breaks gradually ; BERTHA and MRS MELFORT discovered in a large Chair ; BERTHA sleeping, and MRS. MELFORT quite exhausted with Watching and Fatigue ; DURIMEL on his Knees.—He rises and advances, looking frequently at BERTHA.

Dur. Her heavy eyes, fatigued with weeping, yield at length to sleep : repose, sweet innocent ! forget thy griefs, and dream of happiness—she stirs ; no—still as death—I dread the moment of her waking !—Could I escape before—[*Drum at a great Distance*]—Hark ! I hear the distant drum calling the companies to the parade—how rapidly the hours have flown ! Time seems to envy me the few moments yet in my possession, and with giant stride accelerates the approaching hour of my death—Bertha ! dear Bertha ! to part with thee is all I have to do ; but 'tis a task so difficult, so dreadful—no ; this instant will I fly, and spare us both unutterable torment. [*Going.*

Bertha. [*Sleeping.*] Durimel ! Durimel !

Dur. My love !—'twas but a dream ; she smiles upon me—oh ; do not smile, my angel ! for if thou dost, my fortitude forsakes me—Oh ! how have I deserved these sufferings ! No more shall the blest hours, sacred to the chastest tenderness, return ; those, which are to come, belong to courage and to resignation—

To courage? Alas! one moment still remains, enough to shake the firmest soul. Oh, God! 'tis thou must strengthen me—thou knowest 'tis not the brilliant sun which I regret—the idle pleasures of a thoughtless world; but friendship, tenderness, and love—the sentiments with which our natures sympathize—these are the charms that bind me to the earth, and render death so bitter.

Bertha. [*Still sleeping.*] You are his king! you are a God!—Disposer of lives!—my husband!—Pardon, pardon, or I expire at your feet!

[*She screams and starts from the Chair—DURIMEL catches her in his Arms.*]

Mrs. M. My child!

Dur. My Bertha!

Bertha. Where am I?—Oh! unhappy Bertha!—I thought I was upon my knees before thy sovereign; that sovereign thou hast so often called benevolent and merciful—I implored thy pardon—I obtained it—'twas but a dream; yet I will hail it as the happy omen of my husband's safety—no; thou shalt not die—Heaven does not will thy death, and thou shalt live for me.

Dur. Will this blow be the last?—Be calm, my love! Death has for me no terrors—for thee alone I fear—thy sufferings wound my soul! Hear me, Bertha; my father shortly will arrive; with him I must appear before my judges. He wishes to be private with me.

Bertha. Private! must I then leave you?

Dur. But for a little——something, he said, he had to tell me, which might induce my judges to be merciful; then leave me, Bertha! for while thou art present my every thought is centered in thee! Ah! do not weep.

Bertha. How can I cease to weep? Is not thy life my own?

[*ST. FRANC appears behind, but seeing BERTHA withdraws.*]

Dur. Madam, madam ! separate us, I entreat you.

Bertha. Oh ! cruel, cruel !

Dur. Leave me, I conjure you !

Bertha. I obey ! but tell me—tell me, Durimel, dost thou still cherish hope ?

Dur. I do, I do ; forget not to offer up thy prayers in my behalf ; thy virtue may disarm the angry power which threatens to destroy me.

Mrs. M. Come, my beloved child ! let us retire, and implore of Heaven his pardon.

Bertha. Ay, there our earnest prayers will surely not be spurned ; for thence alone can innocence obtain redress, when merciless, inexorable man denies it.

[*Exeunt BERTHA and MRS. MELFORT.*

Dur. I trembled lest they should stay—my father, as I think, appeared, but suddenly withdrew. Now, then, my soul, be firm ; the moment is arrived—What they have seen of me is but a shadow—what they have yet to see will fill them with disgust and horror!—

Enter ST. FRANC.

Were you not here before, sir ?

St. F. I was ; but waited the departure of thy wife. Give me thy hand ; 'tis well—it does not tremble—thou know'st I come for thee.

Dur. I expected you much earlier—Is every thing prepared ?

St. F. The regiment is on the parade, and a detachment waits to conduct you thither.

Dur. Let me entreat you, sir, to avoid this sight ; I tremble for you.

St. F. Oh, heed me not ! extreme misfortunes beget extreme courage.

Dur. Had it but pleased the great Disposer of events to spare my life, to make me the comfort of your latter days—you weep—I have done—Oh ! my dear sir, for the last time bless your unhappy son ; and may

Heaven ratify the pardon, which a father pronounces in his name. [Kneels.]

St. F. Thou hast my blessing, boy; and may the Father of all Mercy open wide his arms, and clasp thee to his breast as I now clasp thee.

Dur. Death is no longer dreadful. Come, father, let us bravely meet it.

St. F. My son, I follow.

Enter VALCOUR.

Val. Hold, my brave soldier; there yet is hope—although my father has refused to grant the delay even of a few hours—though he rejects my prayers and is inflexible—yet if *St. Franc* will but consent, we still may save you.

St. F. Save him! oh, how?

Val. If you have courage to embrace my project, I engage for its success—The regiment is already on the parade; and the detachment which should conduct him thither, waits at the great entrance of the prison—but, as you leave this dungeon, upon the left there is a passage leading to a private door, which opens on the public road—two faithful servants, in whom I can confide, are there in waiting with a carriage. This paper, signed by me, will serve as a passport: then take it instantly, and let him chuse his road.

St. F. What do you offer! Have you no other means of safety? Cruel *Valcour*! think you I will consent that you should risk——

Val. Lose not the time in thinking of the dangers I incur—the enterprise I own is hardy, but it shall be accomplished:—his situation interests me:—my heart bleeds for him—yes, I have resolved to save him. Could I, think you, bear to see him thus perish in the flower of his youth—upon the eve of happiness too, when a beloved tender mistress stretches forth her lovely arms, and hails him the husband of her choice?

—Oh ! no ; I have been falsely thought the vile detested miscreant who betrayed him—why then do I delay an act of justice to myself?—let me this instant break his bonds—give him once more to freedom and his love ; and prove, that though through thoughtlessness I may unconsciously give pain, I have a heart which never ceases to reproach me, till the wrongs my folly has occasioned, are redressed.

St. F. My friend ! my dear friend ! I admire your generous courage—I never can forget it.

Val. Why do you not profit by it ? my arms, this passport, my livery, all promise an easy and a safe retreat—Why, why, then, do you deliberate ?

St. F. Oh ! Heaven support me—my friend will one day know this heart ; and of what sacrifices it is capable—more, more than life is here concerned—thy carriage waits ? then leave us to decide—fly to thy post ;—thy absence will be marked ; and I will follow—alone, or with my——

Val. Is this a time for argument ?—no, no ; believe me 'tis not—each moment now is precious—here, here—take these—[*Giving Purse and Passport*]—no thanks—conduct him from this scene of horror, and may Heaven favour his escape ! [Exit VALCOUR.

St. F. [After a Pause—extending the Purse to DURIMEL.] Charles ! how do you decide ?

Dur. My fate is in your hands—whate'er you shall decree, your son will cheerfully obey.

St. F. Pronounce, my son, and save thy father.

Dur. Alas ! I dare not.

St. F. Oh, Charles ! canst thou conceive how precious is to me thy life ?

Dur. How much more precious is to me your honour ! Was not my person delivered into your charge upon the faith of a promise ?—is not the sacred seal of an oath upon the trust ?

St. F. Oh ! Heaven ! it is.

Dur. The sacrifice of honour is not in our power.

St. F. How gladly would I here lay down my life to save thee.

Dur. My father's word, his faith is pledged; and he must not recede.

St. F. My son—my boy! thou art the hero, and thy father but the man: I am—I will be so—my heart commands it—I have no other law: Come, come, my boy, and let me save thee.

Dur. Never; you have given a sacred promise—I will perform it: believe me, sir, your son would rather suffer death with torture, than live to see his father's shame.

St. F. Thy life is now my only thought; all other cares are lost in that;—fly, then, this instant, fly, and spare thy father—the dreadful spectacle of a loved son expiring at his feet—fly, fly—oh! fly.

Dur. Think you I have so little profited by your instruction and example?—think you me so debased to purchase life with your disgrace?—upon such terms existence would be hateful? Courage, dear father—I am well prepared; then, wherefore this delay? let us go forth, and with a noble firmness, the sure attendants upon upright minds, laugh at the terrors of approaching death. [Going.]

Enter BERTHA.

Ber. Where are you going?—whither would you lead him?—think you, you can again deceive me? I know what fate awaits him—my scattered strength returns; and I have flown to save him. Ah! whither do you fly?—into the cold embrace of death!—and you, cruel, unnatural father! you, you conduct him to the fatal spot.

Dur. Cease, Bertha; cease this frantic grief—'tis fruitless; summon up all thy courage, love! for we must part.

Bertha. Part! Oh, Heaven! here—hide thee here: they cannot find you here: or, if they should, they

will not tear thee hence; no, they dare not tear thee from thy fond Bertha's arms—my deep despair will touch their flinty hearts; my wild entreaties melt their ferocious souls; if these have no effect, my horrid screams will reach the throne of justice, and the red lightning of an angry God shall blast the inhuman butchers of their brethren, who thus would outrage love and nature.

Dur. Speak to her, sir: I cannot.

St. F. Daughter, forbear——

Bertha. If my dear husband perish, what is the universe to me? Fortitude does not belong to me:—my weakness is my only virtue. You may have courage—you have;—I see it:—it alarms me—it is full of terror: but surely you do not—no, you cannot love him with half the tenderness I feel.

St. F. Am I not his father? Who, then, shall vie with me in tenderness?—If I, worn out with sorrow and with age, am firm,—command thy feelings also, and respect my misery.

Dur. Bertha—dear Bertha! the wild expressions of thy agony, are poniards in the bosom of my father.

Bertha. [*Kneeling.*] Oh! pardon the disorder of a distracted wretch, who knows not what she utters—who, in her madness, may accuse e'en Heaven!—Ah! what paper have you there? Is it my husband's pardon?—Will he escape the dreadful sentence?

St. F. 'Tis not impossible, my child: but let the event be what it may, you must now quit this place. [*Leads her to the opposite Side of the Stage.*] My child, my child, let not an old man's tears be shed in vain! Leave him, I entreat you, to fulfil the sacred duties imposed by nature and by honour. This—this is the moment of their triumph.—Go—go, my child, and I will soon rejoin you.

Bertha. With Durimel, my father?

Dur. [After a struggle.] Now! now! Bertha—my love—my wife—adieu! [Exit DURIMEL.]

Ber. He's gone!—Let go your hold—unhand me! Let me, for mercy sake, once more behold him—Let me fly, and perish by his side!—He's gone—he's gone, and I shall never see him more! Oh!—oh! room for my heart!—Oh! Durimel—my love! [Faints.]

St. F. Within there! Help! help! help!

Enter MRS. MELFORT, followed by the KEEPER of the Prison.

Keeper. How now! What is the matter?

Mrs. M. Oh, my unhappy child! look up and bless thy mother with some sign of life!

Durimel. [Without.] Why does my father tarry, when his son requires his aid?

St. F. [Rushes out wildly.] Charles—Charles! I come!

Mrs. M. [To the KEEPER.] Your arm to lead her out.

Durimel. [Without.] Bertha! my love—my wife! eternally farewell!

[Exeunt MRS. MELFORT, BERTHA, and the KEEPER.]

SCENE III.

The Parade.

Halberts fixed—SOLDIERS drawn up in expectation of DURIMEL on each Side of the Stage—VALCOUR and other OFFICERS discovered at their head—muffled Drums beat.

Val. [Aside.] Oh! Heaven! then he has not escaped.

PROCESSION.

When DURIMEL is in his place, and ST. FRANC falls on his Neck, FIRST OFFICER says to VALCOUR.

1 Offi. What can this mean? why all this interest for a stranger?

Val. Humane and generous he ever was—yet I confess I know not to account for such unusual tenderness.

[Muffled Drums beat, ST. FRANC starts wildly from the Arms of DURIMEL, and rushes to the Front of the Stage.]

St. F. Now, spirits! rally round my heart;—but for an instant bear me firmly up, and I no more shall need your aid.—Comrades! friends! brothers! it is decreed, that he who basely quits the colours of his country merits death—the wretched victim, who now kneels before you in awful expectation of his fate, regardless of the stern decree, most rashly has abandoned them; therefore he—Oh! God! oh! God!—must I then struggle with the fondness thou hast placed about my heart, banish the father from my heaving breast, and, trampling on the sacred laws of nature, pronounce the bloody sentence on my own son—horrible! horrible!

Val. St. Franc! my friend! ah! what means this deadly paleness on your cheek—this aimless motion of your eye? let not the generous pity pleading in your breast hurry you to the tomb with the unfortunate it is not in your power to save.

St. F. Oh! that it were within my power; with rapture would I open all these veins; let gush the purple stream that rolls within them, and, to preserve existence to him, exhaust the spring from which it flowed.

Val. How wild is this discourse!

St. F. *[After a Pause.]* Ha! it shall be so.

Val. Pray, pray be calm.

St. F. *[Falling on his Knees.]* Kind Heaven! I thank

thee—thou hast, in mercy, sent my better angel forth—'tis he inspires the thought. [*Muffled Drums beat a short Roll.*] The signal beats; then we'll be brief—Advance, ye ministers of justice; ye, whose fatal arms link time and dread eternity together, advance! prepare! now fire! [ST. FRANC *throws himself before the Body of his Son. During this Speech, the SIX SOLDIERS destined to shoot him advance, Kneel, and Point their Guns; but Recover Arms as soon as VALCOUR speaks.*

Val. Hold! Hold! what may this mystery mean? [DURIMEL *having disengaged himself from the Halberts, and lifted the Bandeau from his Eyes.*] My father faints; fly, fly to his assistance.

[SOLDIERS *assist to recover* ST. FRANC.

Val. Great Heaven! his father!

St. F. Let go your hold—no power on earth shall force me to it. [*Starts up.*] What, barbarians! would you coldly stare, and see a father murder his own son? yes, fellow-soldiers, know he is my son; then save, or strike us both. [*Falls exhausted into his Son's Arms, and SOLDIERS form a Groupe round him.*

Val. Heroic virtue! why, why was this concealed? give him all help; suspend a while the fatal ceremony—for, if my hopes prove true, I yet may bring them pardon.

[*Exit VALCOUR.—The Scene encloses the Others.*

SCENE IV.

MRS. MELFORT'S House.

BERTHA *recovering*—MRS. MELFORT *watching her.*

Bertha. Oh, my mother, are you too their accomplice? Where is my husband? Speak, oh speak!

Mrs. M. Spare me, my child; oh, spare thy mother.

Bertha. Alas! will no one look with pity on my sufferings? They are inexpressible—my mother hears me not, consoles me not—where am I? A heavy mist obscures each object—help, help me, or I die. [*She nearly Faints, when a Roll of the Drum makes her start from the Seat.*] Ah! what is that? Mother! did you not hear the formidable sound? Should it be—it is, it must be so—oh! let me fly and pierce through all their files—let me but see him once—oh! let him, let him hear my last adieus.

Mrs. M. Alas! it is too late.

Bertha. Too late! oh, God! is there no hope?

Mrs. M. None but in Heaven, poor, unhappy Bertha!

Bertha. Is he then abandoned? Left to perish? Why am I detained? [*Drums Roll again.*] It sounds again, and thunder rolls not so awful on the ear—Ah! now I see him, the fatal fillet on his brow—Horrible moment!—It sounds no more! oh! mournful death-like silence! [*Several Guns Fire at once, after which BERTHA exclaims “Durimel!” and Swoons; then Roll of Drums, till she recovers.*]

Mrs. M. My child! my hope, revive! thou art the only consolation left, and canst thou thus abandon me?

Enter VALCOUR.

Assist me, sir, to raise her from the earth.

Val. Soft; she recovers—look up, look up, dear lady, and view the harbinger of joy.

Bertha. Where is my husband now?

Enter ST. FRANC and DURIMEL, who runs and embraces BERTHA.

St. F. Here, here my child; restored once more to liberty and thee.

Mrs. M. Good Heaven !

Bertha. Oh ! joy unutterable ; but how, which way do I regain thee ?

Dur. Behold my guardian angel [*Pointing to VALCOUR.*] he it was whose generous pity saved me—then kneel, my Bertha, kneel with me, and join to thank him for thy husband's life.

Val. Nay ; to your venerable father yield those thanks which your mistaken gratitude now pays to me—his magnanimity it was prevailed ; that, that alone drew tears of pity down my stern father's cheek, quelled his unjust resentment, and, to the arms of a distracted wife, restored a loved, a happy husband.

Bertha. Did I then fancy the report of guns ?

Dur. The firing you heard, was a respect paid by the soldiers to our beloved father ; thus were the arm intended to destroy your husband, discharged in joy for his deliverance.

St. F. Justice has laid her iron rod aside, and yields her throne to Mercy ; who, with a milder sceptre reigning, spreads joy and happiness around.—One fear alone remains to damp them—the fear of your displeasure [*to the Audience.*] let it not hang with sullen influence over us, but kindly banish it with your applause.

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